

PRESIDENT KRIPALANI AND HIS IDEAS

BY
J. S BRIGHT, A. A.

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(Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi)

EDITED BY JAG PARVESH CHANDER

TEACHINGS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

(Foreword by Bala Rajendra Prasad)

TAGORE AND GANDHI ARGUE

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GITA THE MOTHER

THE UNSEEN POWER

THE GOOD LIFE

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Acharya Jiwatram Bhagwandas Kripalani M A -I &-Professor of
History Muzaffarpore College Bihar



Women be Brave—Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani wife of the Congress President visited over one dozen riot affected villages, various sugar camps and discussed the arrangements with local organisers and met a large number of women at Pochigal and demanded from them courage to face any attack bravely

Let us not elevate small disagreements to the seemingly heroic heights of principles. We must also cultivate personal contacts, for men and women are often better than their ideas and ideologies, and this can only be discovered by social contacts. Above all, let no group act as a liquor shop in a respectable neighbourhood, drawing to itself the wayward, the disappointed, and the disgruntled of the family.

ACHARYA KRIPALANI

PREFACE

IF Sardar Patel is the right arm of Mahatma Gandhi, Acharya Kripalani may well be treated as his left limb. Both of them have worked simply, strongly and serenely in the background, and Kripalani has even excelled Patel in the art of self-annihilation for the glorification of the gospel of Gandhism.

This book tells the story of a moral giant who has drudged continually and continuously, as a buttress to Mahatma Gandhi, in India's four four decades of immortal history. His name will go down to posterity as a pillar of Gandhism and a dauntless fighter of freedom. It is the magic wand of extreme self-sacrifice, social service, ceaseless industry, death-defying integrity, and cheerfulness in an atmosphere of extreme provocation that has transmuted Jiwat Ram, the wayward child of nature, into the illustrious President of the Indian National Congress.

Besides being a running account of Kripalani's biography, this book is an analysis of Kripalani's ideology and his outlook into life and literature. President Kripalani is one of those rare politicians who have mastered the great art of the liveableness of human existence, and this book gives a telescopic view of his individuality.

J. S. B.



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CHAPTER I

The Child of Nature

Jiwat Ram, the Boy Kripalani, was out and out a child of nature. Even though the Mother Nature was offended with him because he was fond of sowing the wild oats, yet he lived in harmony with the universal spirit, red in tooth and claw, and sucked the milk of his providential surroundings.

The Jolly Jiwat

Thus writes Prof N. R. Malkani --

I have known Kripalaniji since the days of my nonage when I was a little school-boy. He was my neighbour and a distant relative. Later on life threw us together as colleagues for several years—in G. B. B. College, Muzaferpore and the Gujrat Mahavidyalaya, Ahmedabad. Since then we have met less frequently for our natures and our duties have led us to different destinations. I have remained the simple Prof. Malkani since 1914, but the “Jiwat” of my boyhood grew from “Prof” Kripalani to “Dada Kripalani” and then into “Acharya” Kripalani. Now he stands literally at the top as “President” Kripalani though for many of us he shall ever remain nothing but dear “Dada”.

It is said that a man's most insignificant character of trait is more important than the longest of his speeches and that a man's spoken word is a surer testimonial than his written letter. Kripalanaji has made many speeches and written some books, but the man is more significant than either. A very short acquaintance tells you that he is one

of nature's mutations which belongs to no variety or species but out of whom varieties and species are evolved

II

A SISTER WITH SEVEN BROTHERS

Acharia Jiwat Ram Bhagwandas Kripalani was born in the year 1888 at Hyderabad Sind, in a remarkable AMIL family of seven brothers and only one sister Kripalaniji being sixth in the scale.

His father Kaka Bhagwandas as a retired Tehsildar was a loyal Indian but a staunch vaishnava, who lived in a simple and austere life in his cottage built in front of the pacca family house. He was respected both by his family and his neighbours but there was a large element of fear in that respect. For with a venerable figure he had a quick temper that spared no one and expressed itself in a vigorous dialect.

The second and fifth brothers became converts to Islam and laid their lives at its altar. One died as an absconder during the Khilafat Movement, and was believed to have intrigued with Afghanistan for the invasion of India. The other died in Turkey while defending it against the Greeks before the first Great War.

The third brother was the first AMIL to open first Swadeshi Shop and the first leather shop at Hyderabad Sind.

The seventh became a mere carpenter and then suddenly put on the robe of a Sanyasi with so much fire in it and him that Kripalaniji feared him if he feared anybody.

The last was a daughter Kiki Ben—dear to the whole family and now dedicated to the national cause, but a chip of the family block.

It was family of highly strong individuals, with their stern lips, pinched faces but alert eyes and warm hearts of them, slept very little, had sharp tongues but strong likes and of course dislikes. It was fundamentally a religious-minded family in a community which has little values for religion

III

LUCK AND LABOUR

He passed his Matriculation Examination with some labour and much luck. He, in fact, generally succeeded in passing his examination by that nice combination

He joined the Wilson College Bombay and when passed his first year examination, he picked up his fat books on Mathematics and flung them like rubbish outside the house with choice epithets. He disliked text-books and who could make love to Geometry and Trigonometry as taught in colleges? But his large spacious room, with a row of almost all the English poets, was framed and hung round the four walls with admiration. He doted on English poetry as much as he later hated the English rulers and their ways in India. He read it with great emotion and a tear in his voice

IV

LESSONS IN PATRIOTISM

There he was seen in short coats, silken trousers and a big thick 'danda' in his thin hands during his evening walks. Those were the partition days when there was a ferment among students and swadeshi shops were opened all over the

country Kripalaniji had raised a lot of trouble for Dr Mackicken of the college. So he had to migrate to the quieter atmosphere of D J Sind College Karachi.

Here too in an unfortunate moment Principal Jackson once betrayed himself into saying that You Indians are contemptible liars, in a students general meeting.

It was the year 1907 when he was in B A Class. There was a strike in which he with many others participated and took their first lessons in patriotism. It is since then that politics has run as a red thread through the life of Kripalaniji and he has set up against the rock of British rule in India. It suited his nature which is always prepared for the fray. Those were days when he would attend public meetings with his danda and a band of rowdy students to shout and howl down loyalist speakers without scruple about so called respectability.

After graduating himself he joined Fergusson College Poona for further studies in M. A. There he fell under the influence of Lokmanya Tilak. He took his M. A. Degree in 1909 from the Bombay University and returned to his native province Sind.

V

OUTWITTING THE COLOUR SUPERIORITY

He came to his home at Hyderabad and threw himself at a rest for a complete rest for sometime. But on account of his restless nature he could not stay at home any longer and soon took a job as a teacher in a school at Sukker.

One day a European Inspector of the Education Department came to his class. The students felt very nervous when

they saw the Inspector. In order that his students should not have any fear of the Inspector, Kripalaniji told his students in Sindhi not to be afraid of white skin, he was quite an ordinary person like themselves. As the Inspector did not know Sindhi, he enquired from him what he was saying to the students in Sindhi. Kripalaniji bravely told him in the face what he told his students.

He was ever a beloved of students and a terror to the authorities. One would only love him or fear him and there was no middle course left. Generally speaking, the young have always loved him and the elders, specially those in authority, have feared him.

VI

THE CULT OF THE ROD

The old "danda" has disappeared but the old fire has remained. In fact he thrives on opposition and seems to get the best out of his belicose temper, the expression of his face is usually tense but there is almost a moral justification for it. The features of the face are by no means severe, for these can relax into delightful laughter but the times are tense and the will to action has shaped the features to their high purpose.

In 1915 he left the school teachery and came to the Muzaffarpore College Bihar, as a Professor of History. The College was affiliated to the Calcutta University.

Engaged as a professor he taught the boys not in the humdrum way but tried to inculcate into them a higher life and a nobler vision. He as a teacher was original in outlook, in dress, in manners, in his way of thinking and in his way of teaching. He was the idol of the students who found in him a man of profound intellect combined with great softness of heart.

VII

THE DARLINGS WITH DADA

About his kindness nobility, simplicity and his affection towards friends there are numerous instances. He is called 'Dada' in affection and love by his friends and admirers. He reminds me of the life history of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar of revered fame and name, who when asked by the principal of the Sanskrit College that he should not resign insisted upon his resignation as a matter of principle and self respect stating that if he could not earn Rs. 500 he could earn Rs. 50 outside. And when the Principal told him bluntly that it might be possible that he could not even get Rs. 50 the proud Vidyasagar replied with dignity 'I would be able to earn Rs. 10 but I would kick this job which offers me a much higher emolument but little self respect. That was Vidyasagar. And here was Acharya.

He was appointed the Superintendent of the college hostel. One of the students used to keep his accounts in the hostel. He says that Kripalani had unbounded love and sympathy for the poor and the needy. He had an intense love for his country and was known for his spirit of sacrifice and his patriotism and self abnegation still inspire his admirers with respect and affection for his personality.

Though he had the comfortable job of a professor and was earning a lot, he was leading a very simple and austere life. He always spent very little on himself and the balance he gave to the poor and needy students either for their food and clothing or for their books. He always helped those who had sacrificed everything for their country. He goes on to say that at the close of every 25th or 26th day of the month, the Professor was in the habit of asking him whether

anything would be left at the close of the month. On getting the answer in the affirmative he at once used to take the balance amount from him and it was quite usual for him to distribute the money among the poor. Not only he helped them with his money, but also with his personal belongings. One day, it was a cold winter night, one student came to him. He had no bedding of his own. On coming to know of this, he at once gave him his own bed and spent the night in cold season without any warm covering.

VIII

FREEDOM FROM FANCY FETTERS

One humorous and invigorating is the manner in which he enjoyed freedom—true freedom from cynic-thinking and soul-killing social etiquettes. That he with his friend N. E. Malaki (now Prof. Malkani) would frequently wrestle on the lawn then go up a tree to shout his famous 'baits' of Shah Abdul Latif—the greatest Sufi poet of Sindh.

The language of the 'baits' sounded uncouth. Behari students laughed and listened but could not help admiring their affusions. No one can achieve anything worthwhile without some poesy in his make-up. He has perhaps not composed a single couplet in his life but has a keen poetic sense in his composition. His writings and more so his speeches bear ample testimony to that.

Young or old students have always flocked round him and he has made love to them with readiness. When young he had a knack for having boy "beloveds" and now that he is older he is more generous and has both boy and girl beloveds. He is never more happy than when they gather round him and he chaffs them in his charming Bohemian manner. He has such beloveds in Bihar, Gujerat and U P and feels always at home with them.

IX IN THE TEETH OF TERRORISM

It was a time when Bengal terrorists were abroad and had then congregated in Bihar. The cult was fast becoming the cult of all young patriots. We then took it as little ones catch measles and as young people subsequently took up socialism or communism. It was not their fault or even special virtue but a necessity arising out of the prevailing times. Kripalanji accepted terrorism with as much enthusiasm as Jaya Parkash Narayan later imbibed socialism. New values arise with changing times. But as all streams flow into the river and all rivers fall into the ocean so have all values been summed up by Gandhism and all forces harnessed by Gandhiji. He is the greatest peaceful revolutionary of all times.

CHAPTER II

The Champaran Campaign

When the Generalissimo Gandhi invaded the citadels of imperialism, he found Prof J B Kripalani, M. A., one of his most ardent recruits in the Satyagraha militia. It was the fire of Gandhi's bubbling enthusiasm and absolute sincerity that swung the political pendulum from terrorism to complete non-violence. At long last he found the guide, the guru and the god of nationalism whom he had long been expecting with roseate hopes and wonder-waiting eyes. His contact with Gandhi turned over a new leaf of his career. Straightaway he resigned his professorship and walked off in the footsteps of the Jesus Christ of his conception. Ever since he has been the most beloved lamb in the entire flock of Mahatma Gandhi. Kripalani has made Gandhism the main mission and the motive of his life.

When Gandhi in the year 1917, came to Bihar to help the peasants of Champaran and to resist the oppression of the European indigo planters, many boys and young men joined Gandhi. He was also one of them. He was dismissed from the college and had the honour to be the first Satyagrahi and was arrested at "Champaran."

I

THE MAGNETISM OF THE MAHATMA

As soon as he came under the spell and magnetism of Mahatma Gandhi touched by sincere desire to see our country free he gave up the government service which he was then enjoying with a fairly well-paid salary without thinking of

the morrow What gives credit to this great man was his capacity of living a simple life, firm belief in himself and his will power to 'Do or Die'. The fetters and shackles of his country which bound India to the chariot wheel of the British Imperialism proved too much to his sensitive soul and when another sensitive soul touched his nerve centre, the whole system seemed to be electrified. That was Mahatma Gandhi. The time, therefore had come for him to forsake the easy and cosy path of a professor and to engage himself in nation's emancipation work.

He has spent most part of his life with Gandhi and it is Gandhiji's influence that has converted him from a violent revolutionary that he once was into a confirmed believer in non-violence.

To talk with Acharya on any political matter is itself a liberal education. He is not an individual but an institution. He is saturated with Gandhian philosophy of life and living. Of all the politicians in India love of power has no attraction for him. It is, indeed a matter of great marvel how this man in the midst of his most strenuous work as Secretary of the Congress in the crucial period of the Congress, could snatch hours and devote himself to writing on Gandhian philosophy, Gandhian Ideal, Gandhian education and Gandhian revolution. Charkha is an object of love, adoration and profit, he says.

II

FIELD MARSHAL MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma is his General, Field Marshal his object of worship and his Ideal. In 1941-42 just before the August Movement in all the meetings which he had addressed he emphasised one fact and it is this that Gandhiji, the leader

of the nation, must be followed *in toto*. He also emphasised that there was no greater revolutionary in the country than Mahatma. We could not even realise the full implication of this till in the famous 'Quit India' resolution on the 8th of August 1942, we found what was stated before was absolutely correct. No other leader in India could have the courage to mobilise the total mass of the country to throw itself into the vortex of the non-violent struggle against the most organised government. The Mahatma had, as it were, electrified the nation and infused a new spirit into it. The words, therefore, of Acharya which some doubted came to be absolutely true.

Kripalanji began his political life with faith in the creed of violence, and I believe, would have long ago paid the full price for holding that dangerous creed. Gandhiji himself has told us by what circuitous and devious ways he has come to adopt the new faith but in his own style. He is personally devoted to that great old man and will take up cudgels on his behalf against one and all. In fact, he is the knight-errant of the Working Committee and the majority party of the Congress, giving and taking blows as part of the day's game. But he is no tame or silent or sullen follower of his Master.

He is second to none in the royal camp for telling straight and even unpleasant truths to the Master if need be. Often enough he gratuitously pleads the cause of others more timid or reticent or discreet than he. Nor is he exactly a Gandhite in the Gandhian sense and probably loves the man Gandhi more than the creed known as Gandhism. And if among followers Gandhiji has Leftists and Centrists and Rightists, then Kripalanji emphatically was and has remained the Leftist. It is true that Gandhiji has many followers who

have adopted his creed. It is equally true that the followers of a great man soon reduce the living Master to a dead idol. Kripalaniji is live enough, to keep the Master living ever after his death

III

P A T O PANDIT MALAVIYA

In the year 1918 when Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was the President of the Indian National Congress Kripalaniji was his personal Assistant.

In the year 1919 he joined the Hindu University at Benares but resigned in the following year to join the first Non Co-operation Movement and was sent to jail in 1921

Next year when he was released from the jail, he founded the Gandhi Khaddar Ashram at Benares to carry out Gandhiji's constructive programme.

He was the first to organise spinning centres in U I and the Meerut Ashram, with which he was associated to-day is one of the biggest Khadi producing centres in India.

IV

KRIPALANI BECOMES ACHARYA

At the instance of Mahatma Gandhi he took over the charge of the Principalship of the Gujrat Vidyapith the national University founded by Mahatma Gandhi at Ahmedabad. This post he held for full five years. It was in Gujrat that he was dubbed as Acharya and has remained known as such. He was teaching English and History not as a learned professor stuffed with the knowledge of books. In fact there was or is nothing bookish about the man. He has always smelt of the woods never of libraries and reading rooms. He is ever fresh vigorous and spicy never dull

much less insipid. In the class room and outside he would convince you less by his facts than by their presentation.

He will create for you an atmosphere that is stimulating or may be irritating. In fact you never can tell what is coming next and in what manner. You can only rest assured that he will give you something that is unusual and even unique. Generally speaking he is more fond of analogies and illustrations than bare arguments and where the latter are advanced they will not be wrapped up in a cloud of phrasology but in a direct and forthright manner whose directness tells. Now and then these arguments are matched by his humour that is neither subtle nor even pleasant but is savoury or pungent according to the occasion or his mood. It is said that he would rather lose a friend than miss a joke. But his wit has won him more friends than he has lost. He speaks better than he writes and talks best when he has a fair or a sympathetic audience. Now and then he is even brilliant and smothers you and your voice by a torrent of arguments, sarcasm and ready reply.

V

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE

Kripalanji is not much of a linguist and talks poor Gujerati and an irregular Hindi after his thirty years' stay. But it is a language of love and fun that charms the listeners. He is perhaps a systematic worker and probably an efficient organiser but he is certainly a fine captain of a fine band of loyal workers.

It is strange but true that though born in Sind he has never taken kindly to the province or its people. There is something in the Sindhi get-up against which his being rebels. He dislikes its expensive and coarse imitation of the West, its materialism and attendant snobbery, its lack of

political or religious enthusiasm and when he comes he cannot resist the temptation of exposing all our humbugs and hypocrisies and putting to ridicule our foreign hats and vulgar make up. I once remember his undertaking to introduce some of our leading men to Gandhiji during one of his visits to Sind. He talked in his usual devastating style in the midst of bursts of laughter. But I do not think most of us would relish such a style on such an occasion.

VI

NATIONAL EDUCATION

According to him the schools, colleges and universities do not impart a proper sort of national education fitted for this country and, therefore, he criticises the modern system of education which makes square pegs in round holes and round pegs in square holes without proper development of body, mind and spirit, whereas the Gandhian system of education which aims at all round development and at the same time teaches a boy to earn while learning is best suited to modern conditions. He laid the greatest emphasis before the students in the meetings, where he spoke, on the supreme necessity of building up their character. Purity of conduct, nobility of character, selflessness and the desire not to lead but to follow, not to be master but to be contented to be the camp-follower of a great cause—these were the ideals to be followed by the students. What he himself practises, what he himself believes firmly, he states with vehemence of language before the public. At public meetings his tone would reach the highest pitch of idealism. Himself an idealist though not divorced from realism, he tells his audience all that he feels is required, required to regenerate this country.

VII

THE SALT SATYAGRAHA

In 1930 he joined the Salt Satyagraha movement and was sentenced to one year's imprisonment.

He was the helpmate of Babu Rajendra Prasad in 1934 when the latter organised relief work for the earthquake sufferers of Bihar. In the same year he was appointed Member of the Working Committee of the Congress and at the end of the year its General Secretary in which office he continued for 12 long years. At the most psychological time of the nation he kept the banner of the Congress high, issued circulars and notices by virtue of which the Congressmen were thrilled, as it were, with a new life. The Government wanted to shatter the Congress to blow away its prestige and to wipe it out, if possible. But with Acharya at its helm as Secretary how could it be done? Even if everyone else had deserted, he like Casabianca, would have stood alone on the deck and died at his spot.

VIII

THIS GOD OF GRANITE

This man made of granite, iron and steel, for 12 years guided the destiny of the biggest organisation of the country, nay, of any country including Soviet Russia, the organisation which is the source of inspiration to the Congressmen and an object of terror to the British Government. Naturally the nation's choice has rightly fallen upon him to guide the country to the dawn of freedom. He has a peculiar and uncanny power of distinguishing wheat from chaff, or looking straight at things at all events and at individual, however high he may be. He has a peculiar intuition, as it were of knowing true things from a mass of irrelevant details. His

vibrant personality, purity of mind, utter selflessness his keen, massive and analytical brain—all would be displayed to the best advantage in the most critical period of the nation's history. He is the fittest man to guide the nation's destiny at the zero hour.

IX

THE SEA OF POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

Slender in monetary resources, he never thought what would happen to him in future. He jumped into the sea of political uncertainty as it were, to sink or to swim. Firm and resolute he has been accustomed to the privations of life, prepared to lie on a bed of thorns ready to partake of the humblest of dishes, he has the stuff of which Sennayars are made.

X

THE INVINCIBLE MAN

This man is unshakable in spirit and unbreakable in resolution. His tea, dinner and breakfast are so simple as to repel a man of very humble means. He thinks himself to be a soldier always in armour who must prepare himself for a hard life and there must he ready to face any privation at any time any day he may be clapped into prison by the British Government. Never intoxicated with power or with his position. He was constantly called upon by various students organisations of Allahabad to address them in their various functions. He would tell them in clear terms their strong points and also their weaknesses. He would not pander to their vanity or selflessness but would tell them that they would have to be soldiers for freedom and humble workers who must not aspire for leadership. Any one attending any of his lectures would come carrying some new ideas in his brain and would be elevated by his idealism.

XI

THE TRAVELLER WITH A FEATHER

Rashtrapati of India would ride on an ekka with perhaps greater joy than he would on a big car. Often he was found going about in an ekka or tonga. His luggage while journeying by train may be said to be feather-weight, as if he was journeying by air. He told us a funny story. Once he was called upon to decide a Congress dispute in Bengal and was deputed there. He had as usual his small suitcase and a bedding. The volunteers who had come to receive him at the Howrah Station finding him carrying a small suitcase and a bedding asked him where his other luggages were and requested him to deliver the luggage tickets. Upon this Acharya replied smilingly. "These are my sole luggages." The volunteers felt deeply surprised. The first man of the land is, every inch, the people's man. He is, therefore, during his term of office, expected to do a substantial good to the common people of the land as he knows their wants, their handicaps, difficulties and apprehensions.

He is not a publicity-hunter which has proved the ruin and grave of many a politician in India and abroad. He never wants to push himself forward but is eager to keep himself in the background. By temperament he is a shy and scholarly type of man, who shuns publicity and wants to do work silently.

XII

SENSE OF HUMOUR

His sense of humour is inimitable. He would jeer at himself and at others, and even when overworked he would laugh away the worries of the day with some humorous stories or anecdotes. Sarcastic like Voltaire and cynical like

Diogenes it should be said, however, that they were only the externs of his character. They never go to make up his character. I can well illustrate his sense of humour and sarcasm. When once he was asked by some impertinent students, why he kept long hair, he said, 'Since I have got a small head I must conceal it by long hair, and the boys felt duly snubbed.

XIII

MAN OF LETTERS

Both as a public speaker and as a writer he is distinguished by his daring and originality. Gandhiji has also said of him

There is something in Acharya Kripalani's way of writing and thinking which distinguishes it from others and those who know him can tell at once that a particular thing is from his pen. He is the most powerful exponent of Gandhian philosophy.

He has written a few books viz., 'Gandhian Way', 'Politics of Charkha', 'Non-violent Revolution' and 'Indian National Congress'. In all his writings his style is perfectly simple without being unduly plain, forceful yet never distorted, it glows at times with a flavour and feeling whose appeal to the heart is as direct and sure as that of truest poetry. His style is sometimes highly ornate and musical. It is the natural and almost inevitable expression of the man. His writings have a peculiar classic grace, dignity and weight.

In his inimitable style he has characterised the Wardha Scheme of Education as 'Latest Fad' on which he himself has written a masterful exposition. Though his behaviour sometimes may appear harsh yet his heart is generous and

humane. He is majestic in intellect, honest in purpose, kind and pure in heart and full of wit and humour.

It is said of him that from the very beginning of his life he was politically conscious. Early in his life, he came under the influence of Lokmanya Tilak. Because of his strong national views, he was expelled from the Wilson College, Bombay and the Sind College, Karachi. He stands for Hindu-Muslim unity and in this respect he is like his Master, Mahatma who knows that the Hindus and the Muslims are the two eyes, as it were of the Indian nation. The nation must live in cohesion and harmony on the basis of Hindu-Muslim unity.

CHAPTER III

India Through Four Decades

For four decades from 1917 to 1947, the history of Acharaya Kripalani is the history of Mahatma Gandhi, and the history of Mahatma is the history of India. So thoroughly did Kripalani dissolve himself in the service of the country that his name has become inextricably mixed up with the historic struggles of Mahatma Gandhi and he ceased to be an independent entity. In these four decades he served in various capacities as the crusader of nationalism, from a personal sweeper of Mahatma Gandhi's latrine to that of the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress. The reader can judge the struggles and sacrifices of Kripalani from the struggles and sacrifices of the country and hence this chapter is intended to give a bird's eye view of India's four tumultuous decades during which the citadels of British imperialism were shaken to their very foundations and damaged beyond repair. Those who are interested in only a personal account of Kripalani may well omit a study of this chapter because it deals with the days when the labour of Kripalani may be judged only by the fruits harvested by the forces of nationalism in India under the dynamic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi to whom Kripalani gave a whole and sole obedience of his mind, might and money.

I

UNREST IN INDIA

As the years advanced fresh causes of unrest made their appearance. By a long and varied experience the people have learnt the lesson that it frequently happens that when a Commission is appointed with reference to a matter in which Englishmen and Indians are jointly interested, it is the people of our unfortunate country who come out second best. The remedy is found to be worse than the disease. The Esher Committee at the very start was prejudiced by the appointment on it of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, whose achievements in the Punjab were fresh in the minds of the people. But the astounding recommendations made by it, by which the Indian Army was to be relegated to the position of an appendage to the British Army and was to be controlled from England, struck consternation in the hearts of those who were rejoicing that India was about to enter into a new era wherein it would be gradually released from the leading strings of a foreign nation. The Extremists were delighted in as much as evidence was afforded of their dictum that it is hopeless to expect justice or generosity at the hands of the English rulers and that India's political salvation lies in its separation from England.

Much could not be expected from the Lovett Committee, which was to deal with the reorganisation of the Medical Services in India, for its constitution was shrouded in mystery, and not a single Indian had a seat on it, but the opportunity was availed of to demonstrate before an unbelieving world the omniscience and indispensability of the Indian Civil Service by the fact that the President and one of the members were taken from that illustrious body

of men. As the Committee was born in darkness, it worked in the dark, for the outside world had no knowledge whether the members were regaling themselves with chops and potatoes and small beer or were really employing their time in the investigation of the question for which they were brought into existence. The charge is laid that things were made more pleasant for the European at the expense of the Indians, and thus the existing bitterness is more accentuated especially as in every department of the Imperial Service accretions were made to the pay and allowances of European members whereas those in the subordinate services who were mostly Indians, were either ignored or were dealt with in a niggardly manner. To the treatment accorded to Indians in East Africa and Uganda credit must also be given for further inflaming the minds of the educated classes who are ever ready to resent the display of racial feeling.

II

THE RULERS AND THE RULED

The relations between the rulers and the ruled in India are at present artificial and wholly and solely of a business nature. It is no doubt true that the English are naturally of a reserved nature and that on the part of the people there are drawbacks which discourage a closer contact, but more than this is responsible for the spirit of aloofness which characterizes the dealings of British officials with the people. It is racial pride and the consciousness that they are at present rulers over that they are at present ruled over the land which constitute a gulf separating the two classes. The Secretary of State and the Viceroy tried in the Reforms Report to minimise this failing by dilating on

the reasons which precluded the cultivation of social intercourse, but the evil goes beyond that. They however nearly hit the mark when they said : ' If there are Indians who really desire to see India leave the Empire, to get rid of English officers and English commerce, we believe that among their springs of action will be found the bitterness of feeling that has been nurtured out of some manifestation that the Englishman does not think the Indian an equal ' They deprecated the blunder of discourtesy on the part of Englishmen and women, but the ink was hardly dry when a sample was afforded in the Punjab of such bitter race hatred that the effects of it will not be easily erased from the minds of the people. It is accountable for the existing feeling of irritation and hostility towards the Governments and the irreconcilable attitude that is being maintained in spite of the amends that have been made In respect to the Jallianwala incident the belief is common to all classes and communities that hundreds of defenceless persons, most of whom it is admitted were innocent of any knowledge of wrong-doing, were wantonly murdered in cold blood, and that to the wounded, over a thousand in number, no relief was afforded The indignation that was aroused might have been passed over, as certain English journals, keenly sensitive of the national reputation for humanity, have described as a mad man the author of this achievement and even the British Cabinet has condemned him for offending every canon of civilised Government But the irritation was accentuated by a belief that this and numerous other incidents connected with the Punjab disturbances were prompted by a desire to humiliate the people as members of a subject and inferior race Hence the callous and cynical disregard of their feelings. The antipathy and

hostility to the English that this gave rise to has been so pronounced that it induced the Hindus to make a common cause with the Moslems in a purely religious matter with which they had no concern. The men killed at Jallianwala are looked upon as martyrs, and the dust of the garden soaked with human gore has been sold in the bazzars of distant cities as a sacred and precious relic. The amends made by the British Cabinet have been rejected as inadequate, and the unrest has grown by leaps and bounds. The Special Congress and the Khilafat Conference held in Calcutta in September 1920 contributed their share towards it. Agitators were no doubt active but they would have been powerless if at the bottom there had not been a fruitful soil to work upon. It would be folly indeed a crime to disguise the seriousness of the present situation and the more we make light of it the more remote will be the prospect of a renewal of the old feeling of mutual confidence.

III

THE SPIRIT OF NATIONALITY

But at the same time there are hopeful signs of a better understanding in the future. The concessions made by the Government to the spirit of nationality will in time bear fruit. The removal of the colour bar, as indicated by the appointments of Lord Sinha as Governor of Behar and of Sir Shadi Lal as Chief Justice of the High Court of the Punjab was gratifying to the self esteem of the people, and was taken as affording evidence of a genuine desire to respect their susceptibilities. There was a growing number of Englishmen serving under Indians who have attained to big positions, and no friction had been noticed. In

Delhi, Englishmen and Indians of the same department were sharing houses, a thing which was not heard of ten years ago. The nation had now seen that the Indians were not quite inarticulate in the expression of their wrongs and were far from being important in devising means to redress them. And the new order of things that was ushered in at the beginning of this year made it exceedingly difficult for the Government to initiate and carry out measures which will constitute an encroachment on our rights or be detrimental to the welfare of the country, for any attempt of this nature was sure to raise such a storm of indignation and resentment that it will make the most daring up-pause. "I verily believe we have gone through the worst of our troubles. What was easily done in 1919-20, it will be foolhardy to attempt to do in 1921. The consequences of the Punjab performances have been so serious that we need fear no repetition of them," wrote a British politician.

IV

THE NAGPUR CONGRESS

At the last Congress held in Nagpur, Mr. Lajpat Rai enlarged vehemently on the theme that no faith can be put on British pledges and promises. He pilloried English statesmen one by one (amid cries of 'shame'), and made them out to be absolutely dishonest. He asked if a single member of the British Cabinet could be named whose words carry greater weight than that of a grocer. But this is sheer, unmitigated abuse and not argument, for no details were given as to the dishonesty of any one of them. Mr. Lloyd George was credited with embodying in himself the chivalry, the nobility, the patriotism and the power of the British Empire, and the

speaker went on to add we know how he deceived the Indian Mussalmans and how he broke his pledges. What about the honesty of a man who says that he has kept those pledges, whereas the whole world knows that he has broken them? After this trade one would expect some mention would be made of the precise pledge that had been broken, but this is conspicuous by its absence. Evidently Mr Lajpat Rai was more anxious to impress the Labour Members of Parliament that were present of his thorough command over Bilingsgate than to convince them with the logic of his arguments. Dr M. A. Ansari, as President of the All India Muslim League, was good enough to characterise the Turkish Treaty as a monument of hypocrisy and the blackest breach of solemn pledges and good faith and he charged the Prime Minister of England with treating his solemn pledges as a scrap of paper and with quoting fabricated facts and figures in his interview with the Moslem delegation, but like his Hindu associate he omitted to quote a single fact in support of his allegations.

V

THE FATE OF TURKEY

A careful and impartial reading of Mr Lloyd George's address of January 5th 1918 cannot fail to leave the impression that he cautiously foreshadowed what was going to be the fate of Turkey. We find the Prime Minister specifically stating that outside Europe the same principles should be applied. While we do not challenge the maintenance of the Turkish Empire in the homelands of the Turkish race, with its capital at Constantinople nor the passage between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea being internationalised and neutralised, Arabia, Armenia and Mesopotamia are in

our judgment, entitled to the recognition of their separate national conditions' The only passage capable of misunderstanding or of misconstruction, and on which the Moslem case would seem to rest is 'we are not fighting to deprive Turkey of Constantinople or of the rich and renowned lands in Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race' But this is qualified by the pronouncement: 'The Turk will exercise temporal power in Turkish Lands. Neither do we propose he should retain power over lands which are not Turkish Why? Because that is the principle we are applying to the Christian communities of Europe. The same principles must be applied to the Turk.' In the Peace Treaty with Turkey these terms have been strictly carried out, but it is said, the bulk of the population in Thrace and in Smyrna being Moslem, the handing them over to Greece is a distinct breach of pledge. Either the allegation is correct that subsequent to the outbreak of the war the Turkish Government carried out a systematic deportation of the non-Moslem population from these areas and the statistics of to-day cannot be relied on as a true test of the population, or the evil reputation of Turkey has made it easy to bring a false charge against it. On the other hand, it is obvious that the Moslems of India have had no opportunity for ascertaining the real truth of the matter, and there seem to be no adequate grounds for accusing European statesmen of circulating deliberate untruth During ten days' stay in Smyrna, so far back-as 1884, I was particularly struck with the number of churches that were scattered all over the city, which showed a preponderance of the Christian population, but at the same time bore eloquent testimony to the toleration of the Turks On the other hand, on asking a Greek friend in Cyprus, during a stay there of three months,

why there was such a dearth of handsome men and pretty women amongst his community he said the best looking women had been annexed by the Turks. The English residents there were unanimous in their opinion that if you want to meet a Cypriot gentleman he would be found amongst the Turks. In all my wanderings tourists have never come across a city more beautifully situated than Constantinople, but go to the native quarter and more filthy surroundings you will never find anywhere. The Turk is indeed an incomprehensible being

IV

THE LEAGUE SUPPORTS IMPERIALISM

In this connection it needs to be noted that Moslem soldiers from India had already done a good deal of fighting with the Turks before the delivery of the Prime Minister's speech, more than three years after the commencement of the War. It would be absurd to suppose they were ignorant of what would be the fate of the defeated party so that they performed their duty with a full knowledge of the consequences accruing to the vanquished. At the Conference of the All India Muslim League in 1916 the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Hon'ble Mr. Nabi Ullah congratulated the delegates on the unswerving fidelity with which the Mussalmans had borne their part of the imperial burden and had cheerfully gone to the fight against forces of their Caliph in defence of the cause of the Empire to which their secular destinies were linked. There is no mention here of any bargain having been struck between the British Government and the Moslem soldiers. And Mr. Jinnah, as President of the League, emphasized this by affirming that there had been no cold-calculating instinct at work and that India's loyalty had set no price on itself. But he urged the Government under no circumstances to interfere with the question of the Caliphate and to leave it to the decision of the Mussalman. This seems significant for evidently Mr.

Jinnah, believing the disruption of Turkey was inevitable raised no protest against it. The Allies had freely declared their views in respect to the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, and in his statement of 'War Aims,' President Wilson included 'the liberation of the population subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks.' As to the Khilafat, we shall see presently that the British Government has in no way interfered with it, and if there has been any violation of the Holy Places it has been on the part of the Moslem Turks.

VII

GANDHI LEADS ISLAM

The Mussalmans of India accepted Mr. Gandhi, as their guide, philosopher and friend. As such he delivered in Madras, after the Peace Treaty with Turkey had been signed, an exhaustive address on the Khilafat question. The substance of it was that British statesmen had broken their pledge to the Indian Moslems, whereby the great religion of Islam had been placed in danger, and therefore it was incumbent 'on the Hindus and Mahomedans to offer a united front to the whole of the Christian powers of Europe and tell them that weak as India is, India has still got the capacity of preserving her self-respect, she still knows how to die for her religion and for her self-respect. That is the Khilafat in a nutshell.'

Mr. Gandhi explained it as follows: 'The Mussalmans say frankly, openly and honourably to the whole world that if the British Ministers and the British nation do not fulfil the pledge given to them and do not wish to regard with respect the sentiments of 70 millions of the inhabitants of India, who profess the faith of Islam, it will be impossible for them to retain Islamic loyalty. It is a question then for the rest of the Indian population to consider whether

they want to perform a neighbourly duty by their Mussalman countrymen and if they do they have received an opportunity of a life time, which will not occur for another hundred years, to show their goodwill, fellowship and friendship and to prove what they have been saying for all these long years that the Mahomedan is the brother of the Hindu. If the Hindu regards, that before the connection with the British nation comes his natural connection with his Moslem brother then I say to you that you cannot do otherwise than help the Mussalmans through and through

The statement that 70 millions of Moslems were ready to lay down their lives for the cause rests on no better foundation, as to the rank and file, it may be safely said that, apart from the knowledge that has recently been imparted in course of the agitation now in progress, their mind was a total blank in respect to any obligations on their part to the Sultan of Turkey as Khalifa, and even the Ulemas had but a hazy notion in respect of it. On the mental capacity of those engaged in this propaganda a lucid light is thrown by one of their leaders Mr Fazal ul Haq, a member of the Bengal Council. Writing on the question of non-co-operation, he says — The party to which I have the honour to belong have conceived the mad idea of boycotting the Legislative Councils, and I know it is useless to argue with them, for the wisest amongst them do not possess the brains of a barn-door fowl.

VIII

THE KHILAFAT MOVEMENT

The contribution of Mr Chotani, the President of the Central Khilafat Committee was equally vague. He said

“ The expected has happened, the so called plenipotentiaries of Turkey, who are in fact a creation of the Allies, have signed the Peace Treaty, the terms of which have already been declared as unacceptable and violating the Shariat of Islam by the whole Muslim population of the world. The commandments of the Shariat are irrevocable and unaltered and hence Muslims cannot acquiesce in any terms which are opposed to their religion and faith. So far as we know the Treaty has been signed under extreme pressure and utter helplessness, and therefor carries no weight from the point of view of the Shariat ” That the Shariat has been violated was being incessantly re-echoed, but what this Shariat was no Moslem leader deigned to inform the public, who would certainly have liked a little more light thrown on the subject.

That ‘ the whole Muslim population of the world ’ is agreed that the Shariat of Islam has been violated, is a proposition to which I must demur. The Shariat can have no reference to the integrity of the Turkish Empire, as this came in existence five centuries after the Islamic Scriptures were promulgated. But writes Maulvi A. L. Ahmed ; a Moslem dignitary, that —“There are prophecies in the Holy Koran and Hadis regarding the Sultan of Turkey. These prophecies are now being fulfilled. Those who believe in God and in his words in the Holy Koran and Hadis, knew thoroughly well what has happened would happen. Allah will himself settle the case of the Sultan of Turkey. It is not all necessary that we should interfere with God’s work. ”

The Indian delegates in their sojourn in Europe found much to their discomfiture that they were at cross purposes not only with the Turks, for whom they said they were

ready to give up their lives but with the Moslems of other countries. The Indian Moslems burning with righteous indignation at the conduct of the Allies unfurled the banner of Islam and invited every follower of the Prophet to rally round it in support of the Sultan's Khilafat. No appreciable response was received to start with in India and none whatever outside India as is evident from a letter written by Mr. Mohamed Ali to his brother at home, detailing the views of the Islamic leaders of other countries. In Paris he met Ahmed Riza Bey formerly President of the Turkish Senate and while trying to inoculate him with some of his own religious fervour he wrote pathetically "I am sorry to say it took us two solid hours to make him understand that Turkey's safety lay not merely in doing her duty by herself but in doing her duty by Islam. Of course that is a truism in which he also believed, and yet as the Arabs complain Nationalism is almost everything, even with the best of Turks and they have no definite idea of the obligations imposed on Turkey by the Khilafat and Islam. From the Arabs of Hejaz, who had thrown off the Turkish yoke the Indian delegates could hardly expect, and did not receive any sympathy for their propaganda, for about them it is said that, although they complained of Turkish nationalism they themselves are reverting to the Nationalism, which turned the Khilafat into an Arab dynasty and monarchy in the days of the Omayyids. The Emir Abdulla, brother of Emir Faisal did not hesitate to announce that the Sultan of Turkey had forfeited the right to be Khalifa and that it was the duty of Moslems to select a suitable successor."

As to the Egyptians they were no more amenable to the demands of reason and religion for it was emphasized



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The Flag of freedom.—As June 1948 draws near, the eyes of nationalists are pivoted on the eagle of freedom. President Kripalani is unfurling the National Flag on the Independence Day, January 26, 1947, at Gandhi Grounds at New Delhi. Ministers of the Interim Government were present on the occasion.



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The Fighter of freedom.—As President of the Indian National Congress, it is the serious responsibility of Acharya Kripalani to guide the soldiers of freedom who look up to him for light and lead.



The Tireless Two—Acharya Kripalani and Mahatma Gandhi with an interesting bonnet to protect against sunshine pacing the platform to and fro at New Delhi.

‘ they too, are inclined to imitate Europe just when Europe wants to punish them for this, the sincerest form of flattery ’ At an address delivered by Mr Mahomed Ali in Paris, the letter continues, ‘ the first criticism came from an Egyptian barrister, who said he could not understand what religious aspect there could be about the question, and if we had pleaded from the Nationalist point of view for Turkey or Egypt he could have understood it ’

IX

THE SILENCE OF BUREAUCRACY

The Government of India was silent, and it was a blunder to infer from it that it might yield to Moslem importunities, and that it only needed a resort from one extravagance to another to make this a certainty And even if it had an inclination to yield, it was beyond its power to modify the terms that had been imposed on Turkey by the Allied powers in a body. As regards the restoration of the status quo ante bellum, Mr. Lloyd George drew up a scathing indictment of Turkey, in language that was characterised as offensively frank, but which left no doubts as to the finality of the verdict He said ‘ The Turk has been living on capital. The Balkan war years had dissipated that capital The Balkan wars demonstrated that he was no longer the same formidable person His armies melted before the Bulgarians, before Serbia, and before Greece, that had been his vassal. That has altered the situation The great Powers had kept him together, not because of any particular confidence they had in him, but because they were afraid of what might happen if he disappeared. The late war has completely put an end to that state of things Turkey is broken beyond repair, and from our

point of view we have no reason to regret it. She broke every promise ever made, she lost every friend including Great Britain. We stepped by her through good and evil report. British treasure, British brains, and British blood had been expended on preserving her integrity and her power and at the most critical hour in our history she sold us to our most dangerous and bitterest enemy. Therefore we could not trust her again. Turkey is no more and nothing will put Turkey together again as an Empire.

X

THE ATTITUDE OF JINNAH

Mr Jinnah is red-hot Nationalist, but nevertheless is able to realise wherein lie the best interests of the country and he therefore vehemently opposed the change of creed of the National Congress at Nagpore and of the All-India Muslim League, which emphasized the political connection between India and England. Speaking at the National Congress at Nagpore, he had occasion to allude to

Mr Gandhi. He was at once called to order and asked to address the latter as Mahatma. He said he would willingly do it, but when requested to speak of Mr Mahomed Ali as Maulana, he retorted (amid cries of shame) 'no I will not be dictated to by you, Mr Mahomed Ali. If you will not allow me the liberty to speak of a man in the language which I think is right you are denying me the liberty which you are asking for. I am entitled to say Mr Mahmed Ali'

XI

THE COMING OF MAULANA AZAD

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, presiding at the Khilafat Conference at Nagpore, enunciated his views as follows

animadverted upon in scathing terms by English statesmen, English journals and the British people. In the one case demands were made which were outside the range of practical politics, in the other some reparation was justly and fairly due.

There can be no question that at the close of the year 1920 the tension of feeling was greater than it was at the beginning of the year even though considerable indignation and irritation had then been aroused by the disclosures that had been made of acts of frightfulness on the part of certain British and Indian officials for the hope was entertained of the existing bitterness being removed or at least being mitigated by the findings of the Hunter Committee that was then sitting. But in the course of the year it became more accentuated and the prospect grew daily more discouraging.

XII

THE ROWLATT ACT

An emergency arose in various parts of India, and called into requisition the statesmanship of the rulers. In the North-Western Frontier Sir Roos Keppel and in the United Provinces Sir Harcourt Butler though taking every precaution to prevent an outburst of violence on the part of an unruly mob allowed full scope for the agitation against the Rowlatt Act, and directed the police not to interfere with any public meetings or processions, with the result that there were no riots nor any outrages. Lord Ronaldshay in Calcutta Sir George Lloyd in Bombay and Mr. Barrow in Delhi, though compelled to use force to put down the excesses of unruly mobs, were able by the exercise of tact and discretion to snuff out the ebullitions of the misguided

persons who tried to measure their strength with the might of the British Empire. To attain the same ends in the Punjab, bombs and machine guns, martial law and deeds of frightfulness, were put into requisition. Unfortunately this Province was the victim of a combination of adverse circumstances. The Ghadar organisation, engineered in foreign countries, had found a fruitful soil in the Punjab, where about 8,000 Sikhs had returned to their homes, imbued with revolutionary ideas, and had given play to their activities.

This induced a widespread belief in an organised attempt to overthrow British rule in India, a result to which an unreasoning panic and the discovery of some posters at Lahore, inciting the people to open rebellion, largely contributed. The murder of some Europeans in Amritsar and Kasur, and the brutal and savage attack on a European lady, were calculated to inflame the minds of Englishmen, so that an atmosphere was created in which a sense of proportion was entirely lost. The Punjab was believed to be in open rebellion and the might of the Empire, reinforced with all the latest scientific improvements of warfare, was put forward to crush it.

XIII

GANDHI TAKES THE LEAD

Anyhow the achievements of certain Punjab officials in connection with these disturbances are being put forward by Gandhi and his adherents as a ground for the people to throw off their allegiance to a rule which they assert can produce a Sir Michael O'Dwyer and a General Dyer. Both, it is alleged, made themselves notorious for the extra-ordinary conception of their duty.

That the British Cabinet has condemned General Dyer there can be no question, for it has stigmatized his achievements in Amritsar as transgressing certain standards of conduct which no civilised Government can with immunity neglect and which His Majesty's Government are determined to uphold. There is an absence of violent expletives but would these have made the condemnation more severe? Equally strong is the language used as regard certain other officials, for it is stated that the administration of martial law in the Punjab was marred by a spirit which prompted not generally, but unfortunately not uncommonly the enforcement of punishment and orders calculated if not intended to humiliate Indians as a race, to cause unwarranted inconvenience amounting on occasion to injustice and to flout the standards of propriety and humanity which the inhabitants not only in India in particular but of the civilised world in general have a right to demand of those set in authority over them.

General Dyer was practically dismissed for being refused any employment in India or out of India he retired from the service. Sir Godfrey Fell the Army Secretary speaking in the Legislative Assembly on Mr Jamna Das's Resolution on the Punjab disturbances stated "In my opinion to be made to leave the army in such circumstances was a disgrace and worse than death." Col. Frank Johnson took a similar step to avoid a such like punishment. Mr Bosworth Smith took leave preparatory to forced retirement, for his request to serve till the summer of 1921 had been refused. There were one or two other retirements, and the Home Member gave in the Legislative Council a list of the officials who have been censured. It is then not altogether correct to say that the orders of His Majesty's Government that

the guilty officers should be suitably dealt with, have been entirely flouted, though it is no doubt true that the pound of flesh to which the people believed they were entitled has not been received. As for Sir Michael O'Dwyer, in spite of the eulogy of which he has been the recipient, he has not escaped without punishment.

He left India with the plaudits of Englishmen, official and non-official, that he was the saviour of India, but even the Hunter Committee rejected his theory of a general conspiracy to subvert British rule, as having no basis to go upon and with his latest escapade of making statements which have had to be repudiated by the Government of India, English journals are inclined to fight shy of him. The Times, which had eulogised him in most fulsome terms on his retirement from India, has refused him the hospitality of its columns, but perhaps the unkindest cut of all was given by the non-official European community, which had acclaimed him as saviour of the Punjab. Their representatives in the Legislative Assembly sent a wire to Lord Ampthill, the President of the self-constituted Indian Emergency Committee, of which Sir Michael Dwyer was a shining light, to be good enough not to interfere in the affairs of India.

Sir Michael O' Dwyer gave publicity to the fact that a large number of Punjab officials had decided on resigning their positions, so disgusted were they at the treatment accorded them by the British Government in connection with the Punjab disturbances. The Government of India has contradicted this statement, which on the face of it was improbable, considering Englishmen come out to India with no philanthropic motives, but for the equally legitimate object of earning a living in foreign lands, owing to the struggle for

existence at home. Hitherto they came to this country to rule over this land, but now that the rule is to be divided, and there will be new masters to serve, their innate common sense will lead them to bow to the inevitable, and faithfully to discharge their duties as regards which there can be no question that in the past they have exhibited a decided efficiency in the various departments of administration. They were in the main actuated by the disinterested desire to promote the welfare of the people, but they would have been more than human if they could have entirely subordinated their personal interests and their self-esteem in favour of those whom they had to come to look upon as a subject race.

XIV

THE MORAL VICTORY FOR INDIA

The people have no doubt been disappointed in that the full measure of reparation to which they believed they were entitled has been refused to them but nevertheless the moral victory is theirs. A parallel to this demand for justice is to be found in the trial of Warren Hastings which ended in his acquittal, but the moral victory was with those who impeached him. Lord Morley appropriately points out with that — the side that is defeated on this particular issue is often victorious on the wide and general outcome that if Burke did not succeed in convicting the man he overthrew the system because of the lesson his impeachment had taught with sufficiently impressive force the great lesson that Asiatics have rights and Europeans have obligations.

It would however be idle to deny that the action of the Government of India in respect to the Punjab disorders was some extent inexplicable. It was perhaps rendered still more so by the extraordinary reticence it had chosen to

adopt This was carried to such a length that Dr. Rushbrook Williams, who is now responsible for writing the Report on the Moral and Material Progress of India, which is submitted to Parliament, admits that, 'it was a matter of profound regret' He realises the gravity of the situation that had arisen, for he states 'the growing demand for an enquiry into the origin and suppression of the disorders was nothing more nor less than a demand for unsparing condemnation of the measures and policy of Government'

Racial feeling grew steadily; and until the facts had been elicited by an impartial tribunal, it was hopeless to counsel moderation' But why would they have been hopeless if the facts had been fully and freely stated, and the faults frankly admitted? The danger of a policy of reticence had been expounded by Lord Chelmsford only a few months before, when he stated with reference to the odium which is sometimes incurred by an official in India that, it is partly due to the tradition of the service, dating from days when it had no vocal criticism to jeer, which imposes silence on the individual officer, while the order of things which he represents is attacked and culminated.' And in spite of this the tradition was continued Dr Rushbrook Williams to whom we owe Reports that are both luminous and interesting, realises that some explanation of this attitude is called for, and he gives as follows :—'Most unfortunately throughout all this period Government found itself unable to publish a full and frank account of what had happened, for the simple reason that these happenings were shortly to be made the subject of an enquiry For from the outset Government had recognized, and the Secretary of State had announced in the House of Commons, that an enquiry must be made into the cause of the disturbances and the measures taken to suppress them

It was plainly impossible, consistently with the position of Government, to publish such a full and complete account of the Punjab disturbances as might have satisfied the rising sentiment of the nationalist party. It was impossible to correct misapprehensions and to present the other aspect of the cases. The explanation here given is by no means convincing, especially judged in the light of subsequent events, when disaffection towards Government began openly to be preached on the basis of its alleged shortcomings in respect to the treatment of these disorders. The Hunter Committee Enquiry resolved itself in court of trial as regards the proceeding of individual officer but it scrupulously recognised the fact that it was beyond its province to enter into an investigation of the action of the Government of India, which had technically brought it into existence, or even strictly speaking of the Punjab Government.

We can understand why neither the Viceroy nor any member of the Government visited the Punjab to ascertain either the cause or the progress of the so-called rebellion, and whether as a result of the onslaught with brickbats and lathis a single European was alive to tell the tale of the woes of the rulers of the Punjab with all their bombs and machine guns. In the meantime some of the material law administrators were indulging in a variety of antics, inventing fancy punishments, and earning for themselves a world wide notoriety for their acts of frivolity and frightfulness. And for this the Government of India is being made responsible. It was to repudiate his share of this responsibility for he had protested against the action of the Punjab Government that Sir Sankaran Nair resigned his seat in the Executive Council.

If they were not aware that local officials in the Punjab were frittering away the high reputation of the English nation

for justice and humanity, they had to thank themselves for being content to remain in ignorance as a consequence of the press being muzzled and the news being censored. Sir William Vincent has admitted that except the crawling order, other instances of misconduct were not brought to the notice of the Government of India in time. And despite the fact that the debates in Parliament have made it clear that they kept the Secretary of State informed of all the information that was communicated to them, the imputation still remains that they displayed such a masterly inactivity in gleanng a knowledge of the progress of events that they have lent support to the impression formed by the public that they were neither conniving at or trying deliberately to ignore the acts of flightfulness that were being indulged in by certain Punjab officials, and which are largely responsible for the growing disaffection.

It turned the tables on the rulers of India with a vengeance. To start with, these had unceremoniously, but under the force of circumstances, taken up the position of autocrats, and the people of India, in the guise of mendicants, approached them to ask for certain favours, which were oft-times refused and sometimes granted, and that grudgingly. In the progress of time the people began to make demands instead of asking for favours, and their insistence was such that the Government professed to make concessions and promised specific boons, but at the same time made certain mental reservation, which rendered the promises nugatory. Lord Lytton drew no exaggerated picture when he wrote as Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India, in respect to the manner in which the people of India were being bluffed — ‘We all know that these claims and expectations never can or will be fulfilled. We have had to

chose between prohibiting them and cheating them, and we have chosen the least straight forward course. Since I am writing confidentially I do not hesitate to say that both the Government of England and India appear to me up to the present moment unable to answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered in the car.

XV

THE LEAGUE AND THE CONGRESS

For some years past the annual meeting of the All India Muslim League have been held at the same place as the National Congress. In December 1919 both met at Amritsar which had extended its invitation at the previous Congress and League sessions some months before the deplorable events in the Punjab. It was but natural that feelings should run high in the very spot which was memorable for the achievements of General Dyer. Nevertheless it is a curious fact that, on the whole in spite of the ebullitions of certain individuals there was considerable restraint exercised by the delegates assembled there, and notable amongst them by Mr. Gandhi. He had not then started on the war path and what led him to do so we shall see further on. The fate of Turkey hung in the balance and there can be no question that the educated classes amongst the Muslims were very much exercised and agitated in respect to it. The masses were quiescent, for the Khilafat agitation till then had made no appreciable advance amongst them. The All India Muslim League met on the 29th December and after the presidential speech certain resolutions were put from the chair and passed unanimously. Amongst these was one

which took precedence over others, and was as follows — “ The All-India Muslim League tenders its homage to the person and Throne of His Majesty the King-Emperor, and assures him of the steadfast and continued loyalty of the Mussalman community of India ” At the adjourned meeting on the 30th, the revised draft constitution and rules of the League were considered One of the original clauses read thus, — “ To promote among the Mussalmans of India feeling of loyalty towards the British Crown ” An amendment was proposed to delete the word ‘promote’, and to substitute in its place the word ‘maintain’ Mr Jinnah protested against any change in the objects of the constitution, on the ground that the constitution ought to be considered sacred. The amendment was lost The League therefore, stood committed to the actual promotion of loyalty amongst the Mussalmans

But Mr Jinnah was a bit previous He had not calculated that within a couple of hours the League was to be graced by the presence of individuals, who would not only set at naught this creed, but would eventually oust him from the position of leader of the Muslim community in India The two brothers, Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali, just released from internment, entered the Hall amid a scene of wild enthusiasm, and were received with loud cries of ‘Allah-o-Akbar’ The proceedings were suspended, and Mr Shaukat Ali was asked to address the audience He dwelt on the Turkish and Khilafat questions, and asked the Mohammadians to stand firm in their demands on these heads. He urged them to tell the Viceroy plainly that, if an inch of land in Jazirat-ul-Arab was taken by a non-Moslem Power the 40 crores of Mussalmans would come forward and die for their religion. (Loud cries of Allah-o-

Akbar) They would not give the Government any rest if the Khilafat question was not solved to their satisfaction. He asked them whether they would remain as subjects of the British Empire or as Mussalmans (Cries of 'as Mussalmans as Mussalmans') During the address the delegates were moved to tears. Mr Mahomed Ali was then called upon to speak, and it was reported that during the whole of his speech the audience were weeping and sobbing while he himself was weeping while speaking. He referred to his internment, and dwelt on the religious decadence of Islam. He asked Mussalmans whether they should fear God who was their King of Kings. (Cries of 'we should fear Allah and nobody else') Continuing Mr Mahomed Ali asserted there was no Government except the Government of God. They should not serve anybody as subjects except Allah. He was ready to sacrifice everything his old mother his children and even his life for Allah and his religion. If his release meant anything it meant that he was reaching nearer his God and towards the fulfilment of the dreams of his life. (Loud and prolonged cries of 'Allah-o Akbar') Here we have threats used by the Muslims for the first time, and the foundation laid of the new cult of conditional loyalty which was later on to develop into an absolute repudiation of allegiance.

But in justice to the two brothers it will have to be admitted they had not propounded a new doctrine and that release from internment was not due to any repudiation by them of their longstanding hostility to British rule. And as to this, they had never disguised their attitude to it. In a speech, recently delivered in Madras Mr Mahomed Ali took the people into confidence by informing them that while still in jail at Betul he had communicated to the Viceroy his

views in respect to the invasion of India by the Amir of Afghanistan. 'If,' he had stated, 'the Amir of Kabul, or the Turks, or any outside power, comes to invade our country and its people, and to subjugate them, we shall not only assist but we shall consider it our duty to lead the resistance in India. We have been made slaves once, we do not want to be made slaves again. But if the Amir of Kabul does not enslave India, and does not want to subjugate the people of India, who have never done any harm to the people of Afghanistan or elsewhere, but if he comes to fight against those who have always had an eye on his country, who wanted to subjugate his people, who hold the Holy Places of Islam, who want to crush Islam in their hostile grip, who want to destroy the Muslim faith, and who were bent on destroying the Khilafat, then not only shall we assist but it will be our duty and the duty of everyone who calls himself a Mussalman to gird up his loins and fight the good fight of Islam

It was open to them to withdraw from the position they had taken up, but said Gandhiji, 'do you suppose that Muslims can eat their own words, and withdraw from the honourable position they have taken up?' It is highly unconstitutional for the 70 millions of Mohammedans of India to submit to a violent wrong done to their religion. He therefore advised them to act immediately, for 'to wait is a sin' from a logical point of view they ought in plain and unvarnished terms to have asked the English nation to clear out of this country, or they should have combined to eject them forcibly. This, it was rightly pointed out by Mr Jinnah, at the last session of the Congress at Nagpore, cannot be done without bloodshed, and to this Mr. Gandhi was honestly opposed

As President of the All India Muslim League at Lucknow in 1916 Mr Jinnah emphasized the fact that it is the clear duty of Muslims to be loyal and respectful to Government, which he said had shown a disposition to treat the existing grievances of the people in a broad spirit of understanding and sympathy. He is no dreamer but a man of robust common sense and it made me pause on reading the following sentence in his presidential address in Calcutta —

One degrading measure upon another disappointment upon disappointment, and injury upon injury, can lead a people to only one end. It led Russia to Bolshevism. It has led Ireland to Sinn Féinism. May it lead India to Freedom.

Mr Jinnah said that one wrong after another had been heaped upon the people of the country. The Khilafat and the Punjab affairs were the last straw on the camel's back, and they were convinced that the only remedy the only security or non-recurrence or non-repetition of these grave injustices and outrages that had been perpetrated upon them was the obtaining of complete responsible Government. And he followed this up by opposing Mr Gandhi's programme of non-cooperation, which was aimed at paralyzing the Government, so as to force it to surrender unconditionally.

The trial of Mr Zafar Ali Editor of the Zamindar, gave us some idea of the nature of the agitation. He was charged with having at Hazro harangued ignorant cultivators somewhere about 35 000 in number to the effect that if the British Government did not do certain things in connection with the Khilafat, then remember your Govern-

ment will perish. Remember that India is now Dar-ul-Harab. Our religious freedom has been snatch away. Baghdad was occupied, and virgin Turkish girls were outraged. In fact the atrocities committed were horrible. We value the treaty (with Turkey) as a useless scrap of paper, which will be destroyed by us. Now the question is what should be done under the present circumstances. It is incumbent on every Muslim to perform Hijrat. Stop sending your children to Government schools. No one should enlist in the army. Zaildars and Lambardars should resign their posts. And the audience was made to stand, and to repeat the following words:—‘Remember your Government will perish. We will not join the Army.’ Maulvi Zafar Ali pleaded, that the use of these words was justified by his religious convictions, which derived an ultimate sanction from the teachings of the holy faith of Islam, but that he had exhorted the people to be loyal to the King-Emperor, and to use no violence.

XVI

THE LEADERSHIP OF GANDHI

Gandhi is a man of an emotional nature, and has devoted a good part of his life in espousing the cause of those whom he thinks have been wronged. And as to this, he considers he is the best judge. Sir Valentine Chirol rightly says of him that —‘No one can suspect him of having an axe of his own grind. He is beyond argument, because his conscience tells him he is right, and his conscience must be right.’ And he has also correctly hit at ‘the causes, which

indeed are no secret, that led Gandhiji to start the present campaign. It was the bitter resentment provoked by methods of repression which he regarded as designed to terrorize and humiliate a whole people rather than to punish the actual criminals. Just at this juncture too the fanatics of the Caliphate agitation persuaded Gandhiji that the peace terms unposed upon Turkey were designed in the same spirit, not so much to punish the Turks as to humiliate the whole Islamic world, and destroy the spiritual influence of a religion professed by 60 000 000 fellow Indians.

Further developments followed in the Special Congress at Calcutta when a resolution was moved by Gandhiji, that in view of the misdeeds of Government, the only effectual means to vindicate national honour, and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future, is the establishment of Swarajya. This Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-co-operation until the said wrongs are righted and Swarajya is established. The naked truth stands disclosed. The strenuous agitation that was carried on during the year had for its ultimate end the establishment of complete Home Rule free of any connection with the British nation and this it was alleged could be obtained in one year if the programme of non-co-operation was strictly carried out. Gandhiji was troubled with no regrets and no apprehensions for the future, for in his estimation the British connection had a much lower value than unity between Hindus and Mussalmans, as compared with the honour of the Punjab. He emphasised

that he was for real substantial unity between Hindus and Mussalmans and the British connection. But if he had to choose between that unity and the British connection he would have the unity and sacrifice the connection. If he had to choose between the honour of the Punjab, and therefore of India, and the British connection, he would have the honour of the Punjab and all that it meant, anarchy even, without the slightest hesitation.

It has been reported that in the Subjects Committee, of the Congress at Nagpore, Pándit Madan Mohan Malaviya, speaking on Gandhi's draft resolution in respect to the change of creed, eliminating the British connection, made the remark, 'we are not prepared yet to fight to jam this end.' Mr Shaukat Ali interrupted him with the observation, 'Yes we are. I can promise an army if you will lead.'

XVII

FROM SATYAGRAHA TO NON-CO-OPERATION

From Satyagraha to Non-co-operation was an easy step, but it took just a year to traverse it. On February 28th., 1919, Mr. Gandhi published a pledge, by way of protest against the Rowlatt Bill, binding him and others to refuse obedience to it if passed, and to such other laws as a committee may decide. During March, an agitation on these lines was set in motion on a large scale. The 6th April was fixed as Satyagraha day, to be signalled by a complete hartal, but Delhi anticipated the date and held it on the 30th March, when disorders broke out, leading to some of the rioters being shot down. This inflamed the mind of Mr

Gandhi and he declared that it imposed an added responsibility upon Satyagrahis of stealing their hearts and going on with their struggle until the Rowlatt Legislation was withdrawn.

On the 14th April Mr Gandhi spoke as follows at Ahmedabad 'I have said times without number that Satyagrah admits of no violence no pillage, incendiarism and still in the name of Satyagraha we burnt down buildings, forcibly captured weapons, extorted money, stopped trains, cut off telegraph wires killed innocent people, and plundered shops and private houses. If deeds such as these could save me from the prison house or the scaffold I should not like to be so saved. He imposed on himself a penance of 73 hours fast, and on the 18th April, he ordered a suspension of the Satyagraha movement, for he said when he had embarked upon mass movements he had underrated the forces of evil and over-calculated the chances of Satyagraha being understood by the masses.

But Gandhi is a law unto himself. He came across the two brothers Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali at the Amritsar Congress, and in their company threw himself heart and soul in the Moslem agitation about Turkey. We find him writing a few weeks later in Young India — The Khilafat question has now become a question of question. I trust the Hindus will realise that it overshadows the Reforms and every thing else. He proposes a partial, and thereafter non-co-operation as the only remedy the clearest remedy and the most effective.

XVIII

THE CONGRESS PROGRAMME

Later on the programme was amplified, and by the end of August, when Gandhi and his Moslem associates were touring in Madras Presidency, it had developed the form in which it was presented to the Special Congress, held in Calcutta in the first week of September, except that the last item, 'boycott of foreign goods', was added in the Subjects Committee at the instance of Mr Vijiyaiah Achariar. The Resolution passed by the Special Congress was composed of several parts. The preamble, which need not be quoted here, dilated on the perversity of Government in its failure to give redress in respect to the Khilafat, and on the official misdeeds in the Punjab, and then it declared that the only and sole remedy available was the immediate attainment of Swaraj, and that this could only be acquired by a progressive non-violent non-co-operation. Finally came the curious items of which this was composed, which were as follows —

- (a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies
- (b) Refusal to attend Government Levees, Durbars, and other official and semi-officials or in their honour
- (c) Gradual withdrawal of children from Schools and Colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government, and in place of such Schools and Colleges, establishment of National Schools and Colleges in the various Provinces
- (d) Gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants, and establishment of private arbitration

courts by their aid for the settlement of private disputes.

- (e) Refusal on the part of the military clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia.
- (f) Withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reformed Councils and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may despite the Congress advice offer himself for election.
- (g) Boycott of foreign goods.

And the Resolution went on to add that —Inasmuch as non-co-operation has been conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice without which no nation can make real progress, and inasmuch as an opportunity should be given in the very first stage of non-co-operation to every man woman and child for such discipline and self sacrifice, this Congress advises adoption of Swadeshi in piece goods on a vast scale and inasmuch as the existing mills of India with indigenous capital and control, do not manufacture sufficient yarn and sufficient cloth for the requirements of the nation and are not likely to do so for a long time to come this Congress advises immediate stimulation of further manufacture on a large scale by means of reviving hand spinning and in every home hand weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who have abandoned their ancient and honourable calling for want of encouragement

Tilak's subsequent career is a matter of history. Whether in jail or out of it, he showed the same tenacity, the same courage, that was a life long characteristic. A determined foe of the English. He returned to his native land defeated

and disgraced, though not in the eyes of his own countrymen, broken in health and a doomed man. But his mind was clear, and his faith in India never faltered. With his dying breath he uttered the memorable words, 'we want majorities, not Mahatmas'. What a world of scorn and contempt these few words contain! To him Mahatmas were of no account. He wanted majorities and with these majorities he felt confident India would fight the English and defeat them. He implored his countrymen to have nothing to do with non-co-operation, which he looked upon as the creed of the coward, who avoids a fair fight, and seeks to gain his end by foul means.

Mahatma Gandhi in his defence, in course of a speech delivered in Madras, stated that — "I therefore venture to suggest to my learned countrymen that, so long as the doctrine of non-co-operation remains non-violent, so long there is nothing unconstitutional for me to tell the British Government, 'I refuse to serve you'. Is it unconstitutional for our worthy chairman to return with every respect all the titles that he has ever held from the Government? Is it unconstitutional for any parent to withdraw his children from Government or aided schools? Is it unconstitutional for a lawyer to say I shall no longer support the arm of the law, so long as that arm of the law is used not to raise me, but to debase me? Is it unconstitutional for a civil servant or for a judge to say I refuse to serve a Government which does not wish to respect the wishes of the whole people? I ask, is it unconstitutional for a policeman or for a soldier to tender his resignation when he knows that he is called to serve a Government which traduced his own countrymen? Is it unconstitutional for me to go to the Kisan, (the agriculturist), and say to him, it is not wise for you to pay any taxes, if these

taxes are used by the Government not raise you but to weaken you? I should venture to submit that there is nothing unconstitutional in it."

Mr Edwin Bevan writing to the Times says — Your readers may be interested to learn that the outline of Mr Gandhi's scheme of non-co-operation were drawn by Tolstoi in a letter to a Hindu dated December 14th, 1908. I discovered this accidentally the other day by coming upon a review of a German translation of this letter in an old German periodical. Tolstoi regards British rule in India as a great evil, and he goes on to give his Hindu friend advice as to how the evil is to be got rid of. In a sentence translated by the German reviewer, Tolstoi says, "Do not fight against the evil but on the other hand take no part in it. Refuse all co-operation in the Government Administration in the law courts in the collection of taxes, and above all in the and us one in the world will be able to subjugate you."

In an interview with the Special Correspondent of the Times of India Gandhi further enlarged on this subject. 'My Swaraj, he said is 'Parliamentary Government of India in the modern sense of the term for the time being and that Government would be secured to us either through the friendly offices of the British people or without them. Suppose we made it impossible by disassociation from them to feed their greed they might not wish to remain in India. At that stage India will then have evolved an outstanding spiritual height, or the ability to offer violence. She will have evolved an organising ability of a high order and will therefore be in every way able to cope with any emergency that may arise. My experience during the last few months fills me with the hope that within the nine months that remain during the year in which I have expected Swaraj for India we shall

redress the two wrongs and we shall see Swaraj established according to the wishes of the people" 'Where will the present Government be, at the end of nine months,' asked the press representative Mr Gandhi with a significant smile said, 'The lion will then be with the lamb'

XIX

MONTAGUE-CHELMSFORD REFORMS

On the basis of Montague-Chelmsford report, a new constitution was drawn up, and passed by the British Government. This constitution was regarded as inadequate by the nationalist opinion in India. At about this time a new Act was passed, whereby people could be imprisoned without trial on political grounds for an indefinite period. A country-wide agitation was raised against this Act, and Mahatma Gandhi led it. In order to suppress this agitation terrible massacres were committed by General Dyer in Amritsar. Two enquiry committees were appointed, one by the British and the other by the Congress to enquire into the events. Both the enquiry Committees strongly condemned the action of the British though the Congress enquiry committee went much further in its condemnation. But the steps taken by the Government to compensate the sufferers and to punish the wrong doer were extremely inadequate.

The rest of the story of the Congress struggle after 1920 makes recent history. The Congress gained by the Jallianwala Bagh incident but not from the War tragedy. The Zurich Congress of Socialists at least rejected the War principle. But not the Congress. The straight facts after 1920 are that there was Civil Disobedience, participated in

by a large group of people, including the peasants and the workers.

Then the Chapter closes with the inauguration of the Dyarchy and the dissociation of Gandhi, from the wider movement of the country under the plea of inability to cope with the ideas of violence. The Gujarat Leader having been schooled in highly advanced technique of Satyagraha in Africa simply could not understand the discontent in India among the soldiers, peasants, and the workers caused as a result of the War.

The Chauri-Chaura incident weakened the basis of the Gandhian struggle. The inauguration of the New Constitution was accepted with great acclaim by some of the people of India. The experiment introduced changes in the Indian structure.

XX

THE SWRAJIST PARTY

The Gaya Session of the Congress in 1922 let loose the forces of a political storm. There was a tussle on the question of entry into the legislatures. Q. R. Das was the president. And he was a 'charger'. That is to say he was in favour of bidding goodbye to the political idols of Mahatma Gandhi. There were non-chargers also. They were not in favour of charging the political programme. They blindly accepted Gandhi and Gandhism. The chargers won the first round of the duel. Das was buttressed by Bose. The chargers formed the Swarajist Party. The Swarajists started *Forward* a daily in English. The chief editorship of the organ was entrusted to Srinivas.

The Swarajists contested the elections. And they were returned in overwhelmingly large numbers. The amazing results won an endearing place for Subhas. Das secured a solid majority in the Calcutta Corporation. Subhas assumed the post of the Chief Executive officer, carrying a salary of Rs 3,000 a month, and he reduced it to half. Bose was only twenty-seven. He was the youngest man to occupy that most responsible post. His ever-accumulating popularity excited a jealousy. The Government shilly-shallied over the appointment. "It was not without a great deal of hesitation that they decided to give their approval, as they were required to do under the Statute." Thus Bose found himself at the helm of affairs in the British Empire's second city. He worked like a "Lady with the Lamp" and radiated the light of sanitation in dark, dull and dingy streets of Calcutta.

Das and Bose formed an excellent team. The shrewd politicians and creative administrators changed the very face of corporation. Bureaucracy yielded place to a popular administration. The Corporation officers were dressed in home-made khadi Swadeshi, for the first time became the official dress. Public places were re-named after national leaders. Civic receptions to the gods of bureaucracy were suspended. These honours were reserved for eminent patriots. Free primary education was made available for all. Free milk was supplied to poor children. Free dispensaries came into existence. The officers used to be public masters. For the first time they realized their true position. Now they

became public servants. Subhas Chander Bose was rather too strong for those Britishers who still suffered from 'colour' superiority. Superiority complex was out of place in the new regime. Bose wrought a silent, glorious, bloodless revolution.

How could the Government tolerate this reversal of their paramount power and policy? They had worshipped false gods long enough to discard them at a single blow. The Congress administration was an eye sore to the British authorities. Subhas had hardly half a year to work out his programme. Even in these six months like Irish patriots he slept with his boots on. Early in the morning on October 25 1924 the Deputy Commissioner of Police Calcutta, roused him from his bed. He showed him the warrant. The warrant arrested him. It put a stop to his patriotic activities.

The Bengal Ordinance was in operation. It was promulgated by the Viceroy at midnight. It provided the Bengal Government to arrest and imprison persons without trial. Only an instrument of that type was supposed to arrest nationalism. The Ordinance was brought into force immediately. The freedom of the Indian leaders was getting on the nerves of John Bull. They had plagued the British rather hard. The police rounded up all the nationalists. A clear sweep was made of the revolutionary elements. The Swarajists had brought bureaucracy to a sad end. The reasons for these wholesale arrests was not to be known. The public notion at that time was, says

Subhas Chander Bose, "that the pressure of the Swarajists in the local bodies (especially the Calcutta Municipality) in the Legislatures and at Tarakeswar had unnerved the Government" Consequently, the official circles came out with a school boy excuse. They stated lamely that a revolutionary conspiracy was afoot. Consequently the arrests had to be made before anything serious happened

XXI

THE COMING OF SUBHAS

Subhas Chander Bose was a popular hero. It was no easy job to keep him behind the bars without a sensation. The public raised a very strong clamour. The Anglo-Indian dailies upheld the cause of the Government. They called him "the brain of the revolutionary conspiracy". The *Statesman* and the *Englishman* caused a stir in the Congress circles. The Congress circles brought an action against the *Statesman* and the *Englishman*. It was found that the *Englishman* was not a statesman. The English dailies had no documentary evidence to uphold their allegations. They sought the support of the intelligence Department to save their skins in the defamation case.

Charges were levelled against Subhas Chander Bose straightaway. And the Bengal Police set about to substantiate the charges. Assistance was secured of the India Office in London. The object was not to find the truth. The purpose was to convict Subhas somehow. The proceedings, dragged on for several months. The defence was highly influential. No legal action could be taken. Yet the glorious rebel was not released.

It was forgotten that Subhas was the Chief Executive Officer. His imprisonment naturally dislocated the entire

work of the Corporation. The authorities could find no alternative. They requested him to carry on the work from within the prison walls. No substitute arrangement could be made immediately. For two months the flaps and files were carried to the cell. And there the pending cases were disposed of under the shadows of police guard.

Deshbandh C. R. Das was the real loser. In the absence of Subhas he lost his right hand. As the Mayor of Calcutta he made a stirring speech. He accepted full responsibility for the doings of the Chief Executive Officer. And thereby he hurled a challenge to the British Government. The public agitation was strong. The authorities felt tremendously embarrassed. The release of Subhas was seriously considered. But in his release lay a strong hit to the prestige of the police. And the police was not going to take it lying down. So the consideration of release was dropped. And the glorious patriot was transferred to Alipore Jail.

After three months' detention, orders were issued overnight for his deportation to Mandalay. In the cover of darkness he was driven out of Calcutta. He was accompanied by seven comrades, and seven policemen formed the special escort. The Assistant Inspector General of Police accompanied the prison van.

The patriots welcomed their deportation. Mandalay jails were built to terrify the offenders. But these patriots were not offenders, and the Mandalay jails failed to terrify them. They rather glorified in the idea. They

deemed it a pride to live in them. "I remembered distinctly," wrote Subhas Chander Bose, that it was the place when Lokmanya Tilak had been imprisoned for nearly six years and later on Lala Lajpat Rai for about a year. It gave us, therefore, some consolation and pride to feel that we were following in their footsteps.

Nobody was dismayed. Fermentation cannot horrify the patriots. "We are proud of Subhas," said his parents. The eight Bengali prisoners were characterized as "eight of the most dangerous men in India" by M. Patterson, a Prison Commissioner from England.

Major Fridlav, the Mandalay Superintendent, was an excellent English gentleman. He was willing to offer every kind of comfort and consideration to the political prisoners. He offered them necessary funds and facilities to celebrate Durga Puja holiday in October, 1925, but the Government would not accord permission. The Secretary of State for India has been rightly called the chief jailor. As a consequence of higher authorities high-handedness, the entire glorious group resorted to hunger-strike.

The news was carefully guarded. But the news somehow leaked out. It caused a terrible storm of public indignation. Within less than a fortnight the authorities came down. Public opinion brought them to their knees. Orders were issued to sanction necessary funds and facilities for religious celebrations in future. But there was no question of release. Release was out of question for Bose and Bros.

For two years the goody-goody Government of Glorïoustan kept mum. In vain the down-trodden masses

demanding release of the rebels. The matter was moved in an open court. But the court failed to move in the matter. Law is a slave of the long purse, and the Government has the longest. The arm of law cannot reach her. The arm of law simply over-reaches the British bureaucracy.

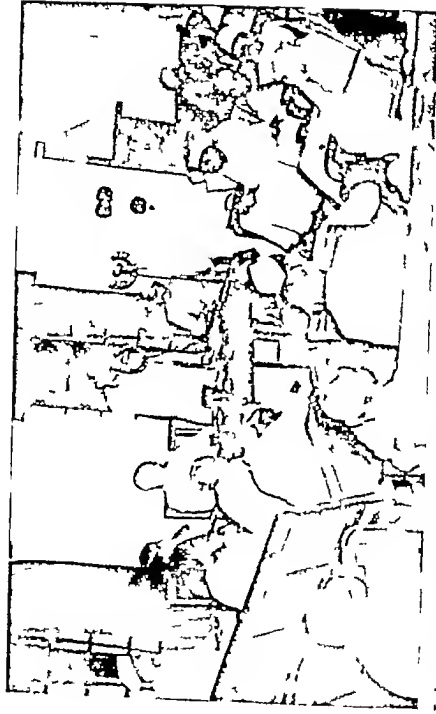
Then there came elections in the month of November, 1926. The Bengal Congress adopted another course. Subhas Chander Bose was offered a constituency for the Bengal Legislature. And he accepted the ticket. The same honour was done to another fellow prisoner Mr S G Mitra. In spite of very strong opponents both were returned with thumping majorities. Heavy pressure was put inside the Legislature and public opinion was exerted outside. But all in vain. The authorities underwent universal censure with the skin of a hippopotamus. The state prisoners were not released. Nor were they sent for trial. Their incarceration continued unchecked.

Mandalay confinement told badly on the health of Subhas. It was a living hell on earth. Subhas was unacquainted with such a hellish, political purgatory. Therefore, he fell dangerously ill. His lungs were affected. Broncho-pneumonia overtook him. His weight fell down by 40 lbs. By April, 1927 he was unable to move. He was absolutely pale and bloodless. His health was in positive danger. The people of Bengal were moved to the marrow in their bones.

The people demanded an unconditional release. But the Government was not prepared to consider even a conditional one. They pushed him instead to Rangoon. A



Between the Whip and the Viceroy — Acharya Kripalani
exchanging political ideas between Lord Mountbatten and Shri
Satyanaram Sinha, the Chief Government Whip



Labour of Love — Acharya Kripalani, a prominent labourer of love in the service of Gandhism, is also an eminent lover of labour in the promotion of Socialism, and is addressing an All-India Labour Conference

medical board was deputed. It consisted of Lieut-Col. Kelsall and the brother of Subhas———Dr. Surin Chander Bose. They made a joint recommendation to the Government. And the Government made an offer in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. Mr. Bose was allowed to proceed to Switzerland for medical treatment. He must travel at his own expense. And he must promise not to stay at any Indian port. He must proceed directly to Rangoon. Subhas suffered from serious physical deterioration. But he was not the least tempted by the offer. He preferred to risk death. He did not want to get a conditional release.

The authorities failed in their enterprise. They failed to receive any assurance from Subhas. They found no alternative. They had to order his unconditional release. Subhas was the young hope of Bengal. And the authorities were afraid of shouldering the risk of his death. They were anxious to escape the heavy responsibility. And their anxiety was real.

Early in the morning of mid-May 1927, sailing from Rangoon, the rebel anchored in the Diamond Harbour. He alighted on to the launch of His Excellency the Governor of Bengal. John Bull is rather sharp in making friendship with the rebels. He was examined by Major Hungstan I M S, Special Physician to His Excellency. Doctors Hungstan, Roy, Sircar and Sands formed the medical board. That day he spent in the launch. Early next morning the Chief of the Intelligence Branch showed him the telegraphic order for his unconditional release.

The very personage three years before had shown him the warrant for his arrest. And these three years had made

a difference of life and death to Subhas. The imprisonment had robbed the Chief Executive Officer of health, vigour and youthfulness. He was now a done up and broken-down, wrecked and ruined consumptive patient, lingering between life and death.

But Subhas had suffered a greater loss than this. The icy hand of destiny had fallen on the greatest son of Bengal—Deshbandhu C. R. Das. The hero of independence was no more. In C. R. Das Subhas lost his political guru.

The Beautiful Beloved Bengal looked up to Brave Bold Bose. After C. R. Das, the leadership of dynamic elements fell heavily on his shoulders. For sometime he was confined to his bed. But for long he would not be confined to his room. Soon he walked forth into the political cricket field.

The people of Bengal had a remarkable respect for his remarkable genius. Immediately they elected him President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. He led the contingent of Bengal delegates to the Madras Congress, presided over by Doctor Ansari. Subhas was appointed General Secretary of the Congress along with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

XII

THE NEHRU COMMITTEE

Then there came off the Nehru Committee to thrash out the principles of a new constitution. The goal was Dominion Status. Subhas was not interested in the Dominion Status. He was disgusted with political quibbles. His eyes were fixed on complete independence.

The Leftists were not satisfied with the All Parties Conference. They called a private meeting at Lucknow. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chander Bose were the authors of the move. Rebel Bose was the first to raise the banner of revolt against the elder group. Thus a new group was formed under the name of Independence League. Might well it remind us of the Independence League which closes the last chapter of his comet career in South East Asia.

Next year the Simon Commission was welcomed even with blacker flags than the Prince of Wales. Even the Jackals in new Delhi (so Jawaharlal has it!) shouted, "Go back, Simon,!" The country boycotted all functions. And Subhas led the boycott. All his life he stood for a decisive struggle with British imperialism. He stressed upon Gandhi to give a positive lead to the country.

Bose visited Gandhi at his Ashram at Sabarmati in May, 1928. He reported to him the enthusiasm of the masses. He begged the Mahatma to come out of retirement. He requested Gandhi to give lead to the country. The reply of the Mahatma was that he did not see any light. Before his very eyes the peasantry of Bardoli were demonstrating through a no-tax campaign that they were ready for the struggle!

"There is absolutely no doubt," wrote Subhas Chander Bose, "that if the Congress Working Committee had taken courage in both hands, they could have anticipated the movement of 1930 by two years and the appointment of the

Simon Commission could have made the starting point of such movement.'

Subhas advocated activities. He was opposed to passivism. And it was passivism that was being preached by the Saint of Sabarmati Mahatma Gandhi was going the way of Shri Amobind Ghose. And this filled Subhas with disgust. He was a pleader of modernization while Gandhiji hugged mediaevalism to his breast.

The gulf widened between the Right and the Left. Pandit Motilal Nehru stood for the all in all acceptance of the Nehru Report of which he himself was the author. Subhas Bose stood for its all in all rejection. Mahatma Gandhi came forward with his compromise formula.

Subject to the exigencies of the political situation, the Congress will adopt the Nehru Constitution in its entirety if it is accepted by the British Parliament on or before December 31 1929 but in the event of its non-acceptance by that date, or its earlier rejection the Congress will organise non-violent non-co-operation by advising the country to refuse Taxation and in such other manner as may be decided upon."

The Leftists were not satisfied. Mr. Bose brought forward an amendment. He spoke in a fighting speech. He declared that the Congress would be content with nothing short of Complete Independence. Jawaharlal made a brilliant speech in support of the amendment. On the merits of its object it evoked universal support. Gandhiji's resolution was in danger of being rejected. There was a

heavy majority against him. There was a thumping victory for the Leftists. Gandhiji came forward with a threat. If the motion was defeated, Gandhiji decided to retire. This menace was enough to turn the tables. Mass psychology could easily be exploited in the halo of saintliness. So the amendment was lost. Bose was not satisfied with the resolution.

“The maximum concession which they could make,” said Subhas, “fell short of the minimum of the left wingers.”

XXIII

THE LAHORE CONGRESS

The Lahore Congress approached in a tense atmosphere. Mahatmajī was conscious of the strength of the opposition. A great struggle lay ahead. A diplomat president with a strong hand was required. Gandhiji's name was proposed. Gandhiji refused to accept the responsibility. Next probability was Sardar Patel. He had displayed outstanding courage in the Bardoli campaign. Gandhiji was shrewd enough to forecast the strength of the opposition. Lahore was the citadel of the coming session. Mahatma Gandhi proposed the name of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for the presidentship, and Pandit Nehru was voted to the chair.

“For the Mahatma,” writes Subhas, “it was essential that he should win over Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, if he wanted to beat down the left wing opposition and regain his former undisputed supremacy over the Congress. For the Mahatma the choice was a prudent one, but for the Congress left wing it proved to be unfortunate, because that event

marked the beginning of a political *rapprochement* between the Mahatma and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and a consequent alienation between the latter and the Congress left wing and his election as President opened a new chapter in his public career. Since then Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has been a consistent and unfailing supporter of Mahatma.

XXIV

THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

Lord Irwin issued a statement promising the Round Table Conference. A manifesto was issued by Congress leaders, appreciating sincerity underlying the Viceroy's pronouncement and making an offer of co-operation to His Majesty's Government. The manifesto was signed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other distinguished personages but Subhas Chander Bose unfurled the banner of Complete Independence. He refused to sign the manifesto. He was opposed to the acceptance of the Dominion Status. And he condemned the idea of participation in the Round Table Conference.

The resolution of complete Independence was brought forward at the Lahore Congress. It was passed unanimously. Mahatma Gandhi included a clause congratulating Lord Irwin on his providential escape from the bombed train. This clause caused considerable excitement. Subhas opposed its inclusion. And he was backed by hot head youths. But Mahatma Gandhi as usual carried the day.

Lahore Congress accepted what the Calcutta Congress had rejected. Complete Independence became the goal of

republican party as was the case in Ireland and to keep up the agitation for independence.

Subhas Bose also moved another very significant resolution. He put before the Congress that the members of the Working Committee should henceforth be elected from the A-I C.C. They should not be nominated by the President. The motion received severe opposition from the Gandhi group. And therefore it was lost. Subhas and his companions regarded the behaviour of the Rightists as most undemocratic. Consequently they staged a walk out from the session. Within less than two minutes a new group was formed. It was known as the Congress Democratic Party. Lahore split was compared to Gaya split. Mr. Bose sent the following telegram to Mrs. C. R. Das

' Circumstances and Tyranny of majority forced us to form a separate party as at Gaya named Congress Democratic Party. Pray spirit of Deshbandhu may guide us and your blessings may inspire us.

Thus Mr. Bose played a brilliant role in the Lahore Congress. A contributor to the Tribune nutshelled the part played by the Radiant Rebel

Mr. Bose " he said " was an embodiment of C. R. Das's spirit fighting against everything that smacked off oppression and for everything that led to the national glory

XV

THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Then there came the Civil Disobedience. There came the stinging national call. And Bengal made a fitting

response to the call. Calcutta offered valuable sacrifices. Subhas Chandra Bose was accused, arrested, convicted and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment. He was sent to Alipor Jail along with other prominent figures from Bengal.

The Mechanical and Bomber prisoners were summoned to court on April 21, 1930. They had mighty complaints against the Government, so they refused to enter the prison van. An alarm was sounded. There came the warders. The officials rushed to the scene. The Pathan convicts also arrived. Subhas Bose and Sen-Gupta also ran to the spot.

The Superintendent ordered forcible removal of the prisoners. He commanded Subhas to go away. But Subhas refused to budge an inch. He protested strongly against the use of force. The Superintendent ordered the forcible dispersal of political prisoners. The Pathans rushed at Bose and his companions. He was pulled down under a severe *lathi* attack. He remained unconscious for about one hour and a half. Several others were injured. The warders removed them to their cells.

The incident sent a wave of horror throughout the country. The Government issued a communique. It was a soap to whitewash the whole affair. Dr. B. C. Roy called it a scrap of paper. Leaders all over the country denounced this disgraceful act. The position of the Superintendent became untenable. The Government safely transferred him

to another place and saved his skin from the angry mob

Mr Subhas Chander Bose, still His Majesty's prisoner was elected as Mayor by the people of Calcutta After his release, he was also elected President of the All India Trade Union Congress. He had sometime to work till the end of the year 1930

Released in September Bose was re-arrested in January He was sentenced to a short term in Maldah District It happened on Independence Day Public meetings were being held at Calcutta. The Independence pledge was being read, Processions were being taken out Subhas Chander Bose, the Mayor of Calcutta, headed the procession The procession was declared unlawful by the Government. But the nationalists did not care much for the Government, much less for its law There was a *lathi* charge by the mounted police The leader of the procession suffered serious injuries.

Subhas Bose was arrested He was convicted. Conviction is easy when the Government is the complainant. Bose was sentenced to six months imprisonment But soon there came the Gandhi Irwin Pact. So Bose was released before he had served the full sentence.

The First Round Table Conference failed utterly The greatest political body was not represented. Also the Government fared badly in the Civil Disobedience Movement So Lord Irwin offered a dish of soup to Lord Gandhi. The soup was accepted And the soup was an insignificant Pact. But the Congress paid the price of the soup And off set

Mahatma Gandhi alone, all alone, like the Ancient Mariner, to partake of the delicious dish in the second Round Table Conference. But the soup left a bitter taste in the mouth of Gandhi and the whole of India. So he came, tumbling back to India. He found that the pleasures of the Pact were over. The policy of repression was already in operation. So Mahatma Gandhi sought an interview with Mahatma Irwin, but it was useless. Gandhi was badly deceived by the mirage of independence.

Subhas Bose had requested Gandhi not to accept any agreement with Lord Irwin without the unconditional release of Sardar Bhagat Singh, the well-known convict of the Punjab Assembly Bomb case. Mahatma gave the strongest assurances to the leaders of Naujwan Bharat Sabha. But his earnest promises were earnestly forgotten. They were not intended to be kept. Gandhi was playing for time. And unluckily he was playing in the hands of Mahatma Irwin. Irwin told Gandhi that he was helpless. The release of Bhagat Singh was a matter that concerned the Punjab Government. Mahatma Gandhi trusted Mahatma Irwin as a child trusts the aunt. And he signed that toy-like pact as between a child and her governess.

The youth of the country were greatly agitated. The Naujwan Bharat Sabha decided to hold an All-India Naujwan Conference. The Conference was held at Karachi on the occasion of the Karachi Congress. A strong protest was lodged against Mahatma Gandhi. The Conference

Pact was torn to pieces. Mr Subhas Chander Bose presided over the Conference.

Bhagat Singh Sukhdev and Raj Guru were executed at Lahore and cremated on the banks of the Ravi on March 23. Just as the Karachi Congress was proceeding at Karachi Gandhiji was received at Karachi with black flags by young men. Even brickbats were thrown at him. A black flower was presented to Gandhiji in honour of the Gandhi Irwin Pact.

Mahatma Gandhi as everybody expected except Mahatma Gandhi returned dolefully disappointed from the second Round Table. Not only was he empty handed. More than that, he was broken hearted. A meeting of the Congress Working Committee was called in Bombay.

Subhas Chander Bose who was unseated at Lahore, was called to Bombay by a special invitation. He was asked to place his views before the Congress Cabinet. Clarification was necessary. The Congress High Command desired an exchange of ideas.

This was exactly what the Government was out to prevent. Subhas was arrested under Regulation III of 1918. Consumptive as he was, Subhas received a severe attack in Jail. Early in 1933 the authorities released him from detention. They allowed him to proceed to Europe for medical treatment. But they did not allow him to see even his parents in India. Even in Europe he was not given unrestricted freedom. He could not visit Germany.

Bose went to Vienna. He remained there for sometime.

Austria was a republic. The socialist experiments interested Subhas. He met Karl Sietz, the Mayor of Vienna. The Mayor showed him the achievements of Socialist Municipal regime. He was at the parade of Heimwehr troops at Schonbrunn. It was a celebration of the Victory Day against the Turks. It impressed Subhas. He admired disciplined organizations.

Mr Bose met Mr V J Patel, the ex-President of the Central Assembly, who was also undergoing treatment. They remained constant companions until the death of Patel separated them. Both were relentless enemies of the reactionary element in the Congress. They wanted to purge the Congress of compromising ideas. And they wanted to put the case of India before the world. Therefore, they joined their hands together. Patel was very keen about it. He left one lakh of rupees for purposes of foreign propaganda. And he made Subhas Bose the trustee of his money. These ideas of foreign propaganda were later stressed by Jawaharlal Nehru. But these Vienna invalids were the fathers of the move.

Subhas was invited by the Indian residents in England to preside over the All Parties London Conference of Indians. The British Government refused to grant him the passport. So he sent a written address. It was read by Dr Bhatt in his absence. He appealed to Indians to view the situation in India in the background of world politics. He criticized the short-sightedness of Mahatma Gandhi. "If the Delhi Pact, 1931 was a blunder," he said, "the Surrender of 1933

was a calamity of the first magnitude." The Movement was suspended at a critical hour. Consequently the sacrifices of India for the last thirteen years were practically undone.

Subhas took a flight to Prague in July 1939 and stayed there for ten days. It was the Middle class republic of Europe. And Bose was received there enthusiastically. The Mayor of Prague showed him round the city. He also met Dr. Benes the Foreign Minister.

The father of Subhas Bose fell seriously ill. And so he flew to India. On landing he was served with an order under Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act. Bose was told 'to proceed at once to 38 2 Elgin Road and reside there till further orders'. He was not to absent himself from the precincts of the said house. Bose was not to interview any visitor at any time. He was not to correspond, converse, or communicate or associate in any manner with anybody. Only the members of his family were excepted. There were many restrictions and the punishment for disobedience was seven years.

The father died as soon as the son arrived. He wanted to stay for sometime in the country. The Government served him with an order to return to Europe within one week.

A carceration in my country wrote Bose to the Bengal authorities. Is better than freedom abroad.

Bose wanted to stay at least for one month. But the Government would not agree to that. Moreover, his health had deteriorated. His physicians wanted him back to Vienna. So off he sailed on January 10 1934. He gave an interview to the press before his departure.

“ We are passing through a political slump,” he said, “ and the problem before us is to keep up the enthusiasm of the people ”

European visits brought about a great orientation in the outlook of Subhas. In spite of his poor health, he led a hectic life. His book, *The Indian Struggle*, created a great sensation. The book was printed in England but banned into India. Sir Samuel Hoare declared that it encouraged terrorism.

Bose met Aman Ullah, the Ex-Emperor of Afghanistan in Rome. Bose unveiled Patel's statue in Geneva. Bose defended India against films that insulted the dignity of India. Bose vehemently denounced the speech of Hitler in which he declared that it was the destiny of white people to rule over the black races. Bose met De Valera in Dublin. He was given a state reception. It strengthened the bonds between India and Ireland.

XXVI

THE LUCKNOW SESSION

The Lucknow Session of the Indian Congress was approaching near. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the President-elect. The presence of Mr. Bose was widely desired. So Pandit Nehru conveyed the sentiments of the nation to Mr. Bose in Vienna. An invitation was extended to him to attend the Session. But the Government was dead against his entry. Forthwith he was served with a notice. But Bose was not the man to respect notices. The call of the country was dear to his heart. So off he set for India in an Italian steamer.

Subhas Chander Bose landed on the soil of Hindustan on April, 1936. Thousands of men and women had collected

to accord a royal reception to the unique patriot. To their great dismay Bose was arrested as soon as he disembarked. An order under Section 3 of Regulation III of 1818 was served on him. He was sent to the Yervada Jail but he left an inspiring message behind

Keep the flag of freedom flying he said

The whole country raised a hue and cry. Questions were raised in England. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that it was one of the latest and most significant instances of wide spread intensive suppression of Civil liberties in India. An adjournment motion was tabled in the Central Assembly. Resolutions were passed everywhere in the country. The Government was unnerved a little. The Secretary of State said that Bose was associated with terrorist gangs. But the public did not believe this. And the public pressure continued. So Subhas Chander Bose was released in March, 1937 on the eve of the introduction of the Provincial Autonomy.

Subhas proceeded again to Europe on account of unsatisfactory health. But this time he went as a free man. A grand reception was accorded to him in London. He delivered half a dozen speeches and criticized the Government of India Act bitterly.

XVII

THE HARIPURA CONGRESS

Bose was elected President of the Indian National Congress for 1938. So he flew back to India. A royal reception was accorded to him at Karachi aerodrome. The Congress was to be held at Haripura on the banks of the river Tapu. The Congress Nagar presented a view of enchantment. It was the 51st Session of the Congress.

Fifty-one gates were constructed
Fifty-one National flags were hoisted.
Fifty-one bullocks drew the chariot
Fifty-one National songs were sung

“ We are blessed with the Presidentship of one whose life is one of unbroken records of sacrifice and service and suffering, ” said the Chairman of the Reception Committee. “ I hope and pray that under the wise guidance our President and we may march further forward to our Goal and add more glorious chapters to our history ”

XXVIII

GANDHI AND BOSE

Time proved that there were acute differences between the Congress President and the Congress Cabinet. Subhas Bose was an uncompromising fighter of freedom. At any rate, he was not going to have a compromise with the reactionaries. Consequently Mahatma Gandhi was re-elected in spite of all the opposition from the Gandhi Group. The country gave its verdict in favour of Subhas Chander Bose. Gandhi was cut to the quick.

“ I must confess, ” said Mahatma Gandhi dejectedly, “ that from the very beginning I was decidedly against his re-election for reason into which I need not go. Since I was instrumental in inducing Dr. Pattabhi not to draw his name as a candidate, the defeat is more mine than his. And I am nothing if I do not represent definite principles and policy. Therefore, it is plain to me that the delegates do not approve of the principles and policy for which I stand. I rejoice in the defeat. The minority can only wish the majority all success. If they cannot keep pace with it, they must come out of the Congress ”

This was an undemocratic call. But those who cared for Gandhi they did not care a fig for democracy. So the Gandhi Group threatened to resign. And Subhas Bose was left alone in the desert. So he was disqualified and the coast was kept clean for Gandhi and his God. The followers of the Mahatma were left saddled in their cosy corners in the Congress Cabinet. Bose and his followers formed the Forward Bloc.

Broken-down and bed ridden Mr Subhas Chander Bose ceased to be even a four anna member of the Congress. The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee elected him as President. So the Congress High Command suspended the Bengal Congress also.

But the spirit of Subhas was not broken. Soon he plunged himself in patriotic fire. The Holwell monument at Calcutta was a standing disgrace to nationalism. Several attempts were previously made for its removal. But these attempts did not fructify. Now Mr Bose led a peaceful agitation. The people of Bengal followed him gladly. The Bengal Government got perturbed. And they promptly arrested Bose under the new fangled Defence of India Rules. Bose was arrested. But the movement could not be arrested. So the Government removed the monument to some safe place.

Subhas Chander Bose still a prisoner was returned unopposed to the Central Assembly in a by-election. Although the monument was removed the hero was not released. They considered it necessary to keep him behind the bars. The Defence of India Rules were an easy handle in the hands of the Government. He was to be tried for a speech at Mohammad Ali Park and an article in the

Forward Bloc. The article was entitled the "Day of Reckoning".

Mr Bose regarded his detention to be most unjust. There was nothing against him. His health seriously deteriorated in Jail. He resorted to hunger strike as a protest. He wrote a letter to the Governor of Bengal on November 26, 1940. This letter may be looked upon as the political testament of Subhas Chander Bose ,

"There has been manifest illegality and injustice. Only one explanation can, to my mind, account for such strange conduct, viz , that Government have been pursuing a frankly vindictive policy towards me for reasons that are quite inexplicable . . .

"In this mortal world, everything perishes and will perish but ideas, ideals and dreams do not. One individual may die for an idea, but that idea will, after his death, incarnate itself in a thousand lives. That is how the wheels of evolution move on and the ideas, the dreams of one generation are bequeathed to the next. No idea has even filled itself in the world except through an ordeal of suffering and sacrifice.

What greater solace can there be than the feeling that one has lived and died for a principle ? What higher satisfaction can a man possess than the knowledge that his spirit will beget kindred spirits to carry on his unfinished task ? What better reward can a soul desire than the certainty that his message will be wafted over hills and dales and over the broad plains to every corner of his land and across the seas to distant lands ? What higher consummation can life attain than peaceful self-immolation at the altar of one's cause ?

"Hence it is evident that nobody can lose through suffering and sacrifice. If he does lose anything of the earth

he will gain much more in return, by becoming the heir to a life immortal.

'This is the technique of the Soul. The individual must die, so that the nation may live. To-day I must die so that India may live and may win freedom and glory

XXIX

FROM QUIT INDIA TO KRIPALANI

The Congress met after six years—these six years eventful, tempestuous, cataclysmic, have shaken not only India but the entire world to its very foundations and changed the shape of things to an astonishing degree. In reviewing the long procession of revolutionary happenings and analysing the present situation, its President, Acharya Kripalani, had a stupendous and complicated task to perform. But as the possessor of the gifts of a born historian a keen insight and ratiocinative mind he had no difficulty in performing it with remarkable success. He did not confine himself to presenting to the Indian people a clear analytical picture of the political developments that have a tremendous bearing on their present and future life. He gave them a bold and sound lead which, if followed unswervingly—with stoical indifference to communal aberrations and explosions and with firm faith in the great destiny of India—would ensure the quickest possible crystallisation of pure democratic freedom. Acharya Kripalani, in tracing the mighty factors that have led to the modification of Britain's attitude towards India and the showing of greater respect by her to democratic Indian urges and impulses, laid special emphasis on the 1941 Individual Civil Disobedience Movement and the 1942 Quit India Struggle. It was indeed the latter which was the most powerful internal factor in the en-

feeblerment of British Imperialism's strangulating grip on this country. But, though pregnant with extraordinary consequences, this factor by itself would not have been very effective. The meaningful might of the Soviet Union revealed during the titanic world conflict and its pressure felt on the Indian border during the post-war unrest—particularly through Iran—coupled with the effect of the operation of the Indian National Army, organised under the inspiring leadership of Netaji Subhas Chander Bose, which was noticeable not only in the changed attitude and conduct of the Indian masses but also in the altered mood and manner of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force, enhanced its effectiveness immensely. Britain bent in this country under the greatly increased weight of internal and external forces—as a result of the Labour Party, professing to be wedded to the ideal of universal socialist freedom, coming to the helm of British affairs she exhibited more flexibility than she would have otherwise done—and she relaxed her hold perceptibly, promising to the Indian people the unrestricted enjoyment of complete liberty in the near future. But behind the fine facade of Labour pliability existed ugly Churchillism.

CHAPTER IV

The Mighty Man of Meerut

Acharya Kripalani has had the unique opportunity to preside over the Meerut Session of the Indian National Congress in the year of grace nineteen hundred and forty six an honour for which he had undergone a long apprenticeship and at a place which is known in history for its magnificent role in the Revolt of 1857. It was a fitting place for a well reserved honour to a meritorious man immediately after the Quit India Revolt of 1942. Acharya has had other personal and political associations with Meerut and he could not have asked for any other place if his choice at all influenced the decisions of the Congress. The battles of Panipat were fought close to Meerut and even the Red Fort—the goal of I N A —is fairly at hand.

I

PUSHING TO THE FRONT

Once being elected the President he issued the following statement to the press

‘ The nation has done me great honour in electing me President for the next session of the Congress. I have received numerous messages of congratulation from friends. I however feel that the messages are to-day premature. They will be in place only when I relinquish the rein of office. If then I have done well I may deserve congratulations. What I need are the blessings of elders and the good wishes of friends and colleagues.

"I am not unconscious of my limitations I know I have neither the brilliance, nor the scholarship of my distinguished predecessors in office I have been throughout my public life of over 30 years and more a soldier in the fight for freedom The soldier's highest virtue is not his capacity to fight or kill, but his ability if need be to die at his post. This, God helping, I shall not hesitate to do when occasion requires "The task before me at this critical stage of our political history overwhelms me Some friends have sincere doubts of my capacity to shoulder it, and well might, for the task is heavy. They think that I am vehement in my language It is not for me to deny this charge I can only say that this vehemence is due more to the depth of my feelings than my temper. But, however, vehement my expression, it is always in the interest of ideas.

II

HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

"Some friends have accused me of being anti-Islam A few days back I answered this charge publicly All I wish to say now is that I have never been guilty so far as I know myself of communal bias.

"So far as the Hindu-Muslim differences go, I feel that the economic and political interests of the masses are identical My first task I conceive then is to exert my utmost in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity so that the inhumanities and barbarities that recently disfigures and disgraced Calcutta and still do East Bengal, becomes things of the past "

III

CONSOLIDATION OF CONGRESS

"My second concern will be the purification and consolidation of our Organization We have gained much

through it. But we must be conscious of its growing defects. These cannot be removed merely by external and constitutional devices. They can only be removed by the cultivation of public virtues.

IV

MOVE TO MEERUT

On 21st November 1946 he moved from Delhi to Meerut and was accompanied by Mrs. Kripalani and the out-going President and India's first Premier Pandit Nehru. He arrived late by one hour and was received at Manigate entrance to Congressnagar where a formal reception was accorded to the Rashtrapati Premier Pant Mr Kidwai, Mr Sampurnanand Babu Purnhotamdas Tandon and the Reception Committee office bearers received Acharya Kripalani and Pandit Nehru. The President was garlanded by Mr Raghubir Narain Sinha Chairman and Mr Kidwai. As Acharya Kripalani and Pandit Nehru stepped up a raised platform, with the national flag flying overhead, volunteers both men and ladies stood attention under the command of General Shahinawaz.

Acharya Kripalani received the salute and the orchestra played ' Bandematram.

The President inspected the volunteers and then the I N A. song. Acharya Kripalani and Pandit Nehru stood side by side in a salute pose.

On the next day the tricolour was hoisted by him.

Before a huge gathering of Congress volunteers and others, while party leaders continued to arrive from all over India. The outgoing President Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was present during the flag salutation.

Tall handsome, Red Shirt volunteers in their bright red uniforms looked picturesque standing with other

volunteers, of whom men-volunteers wore khaki and girl volunteers had light saffron colour sarees. Slogans raised were "Rashtrapati ki Jai".

The whole ceremony was over in ten minutes.

While unfurling the tricolour he said

"This flag embodies the Indian people's hopes and aspirations as well as the sacrifices for wresting independence from unwilling hands of the foreign ruling power. India too had her imperialism in the hoary past but that imperialism was of a unique kind. It symbolised the domination of India over the domain of mind and spirit and not over the territories of weaker peoples."

"Indians' fight for freedom is not yet over and even when it is so there will be no dearth of international gangsters to pounce on our beloved motherland. Hundreds and thousands of workers have died to maintain the honour of our national flag and, therefore, special responsibility devolves on us all to see that its honour remains unsullied."

V

FROM THE CHAIR

President Kripalani's first words to the A-I. C. C. members were "Hum tum ko jante hain, aur tum hamko khurb jante ho" (I know you and you know me very well). This created a loud laughter and some members of the A-I C. C. murmured "That is true indeed."

President Kripalani acted as Acharya (Principal) and disallowed recess to the A-I C. C. members for tea. Amidst laughter, he said "There will be no 'chutti' for tea but those who can't do without tea can absent themselves for tea."

On 25th November 1946 the A. I. C. C. Session adjourned. He in his concluding speech, again made a fervent appeal for communal unity. He said

I told you and I repeat that we in India—whether we are Hindus, Mohammedans, Parsis, Christians or followers of any other faith—cannot leave this country. There is no other country that cannot be ours. We have to live together. Let us leave in peace and brotherhood. If we do not do so, nature will make us suffer and after great sufferings we will have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that those whom God united nobody can separate. Any Hindu who offends a Mussalman is doing injustice to his community and his country and any Muslim who offends a Hindu is destroying his religion and the freedom of his country.

Addressing his radical friends, Acharya Kripalani said: 'I have learnt non-violence from Gandhiji. I do not hesitate to tell you that I used to believe in violence and belonged to the group of revolutionaries in 1906 and 1907. Even in the days of my revolutionary life I hope I was a brave man and I would not have hesitated to mount the gallows but I never felt so fearless, so bold, so strong as when I accepted the creed of non-violence from Gandhiji (cheers).

If this country is to rise it will rise by non-violence and by no other method. We are divided into so many groups—political, economic and religious—that if we use violence against the foreign enemy, we are sure to use that violence against each other also. They who live by the

sword shall die by the sword ; now the world has introduced the atomic bomb but something worse will come unless it takes stock of what it has been doing hitherto I do not condemn people because they use violence.

“ Non-violence is a new creed but I want to place it before you because I have tried both the methods and found that non-violence is the superior method The light has been lighted and it will guide us whether you wish it or not If you are going to solve your problems by untruth, by crooked diplomacy, the world problems will not be solved In one word the difference between Socialism and Gandhism is that Gandhiji says that the means shall be as pure as your ends are high High aims cannot be served by crooked means This, in a nutshell, is the difference between Western socialism and the Eastern socialism of this old ‘ bania ’ ‘ The world will not be safe from war or strife or bloodshed until this doctrine is accepted Whether you accept it to-day or to-morrow or after a century, remember that century will be a troublesome century for humanity ”

VI

BOSE BELONGS TO INDIA

Explaining why Netaji Subhas Chander Bose's name had not been included in the condolence resolution, Acharya Kripalani said “ Let nobody make an All-India leader a party leader Subhas Bose does not belong to the Forward Bloc or to the I N A or to the Radicals or any group He belongs to India (cheers) for whom he worked and for whom I hope he is still living (renewed cheers) In Bombay

I was asked to speak about the I N A. I said that but for my creed of non-violence I would have acted exactly as Subhas Babu did (cheers). I would not have felt ashamed but I would have felt proud. I would have thought I had done the greatest service for my country and I would have said that I have done what in history many great people have done.

'To go away from the prison house that India is and to organise an independence movement outside India is the most patriotic service that a man can do (loud cheers) provided he believes in armed resistance.

'I do not believe in that but I do not want to impose my standards of conduct upon others. I judge people by the standards they have kept before themselves provided those standards are recognised by humanity as high standards. That evil should be resisted by war and violence is recognised by the priests of great religion even to-day. How can I condemn a brother of mine who has done the greatest service to the country? Remember that when once it was said that he was dead Mahatma Gandhi was the first man to send a telegram to his mother and the Working Committee joined in it.

VII

WHY MAHRATTAS LOST THE PANIPAT ?

A woman office-holder of the Reception Committee announced on the loudspeaker. Any of you who have lost a child can have it from us.

The President on hearing the above announcement said. Do you know why the Mahrattas lost the battle of

Panipat? They brought their children and familie with them to Panipat in the hope of fighting the political issue as also of availing the opportunity of pilgrimage to Hardwar. You know what end they met, that is an historical fact. So, please, when you come here to discuss Politics, leave your children at home ”

VIII

THE MARCH OF EVENTS

In the Subjects Committee, Pandit Nehru moved a lengthy resolution giving a retrospect of events in India and the world and calling upon the people to put an end to internecine conflict and face the internal and external dangers as a united people in the spirit in which they have fought in the past for India's independence

The resolution was first passed by the Congress Working Committee.

Following is the text of the resolution

“This Congress meeting after six and a half years of war and upheaval and frightfulness, pays its homage to the memory of all those who have given their lives in the cause of Indian freedom and all those who have suffered in the struggle for freedom and the emancipation of India's millions

“During these years the world war raged in all its fury, and in India the armed might of an alien imperialist power tried to crush the spirit of freedom and the passionate desire of the Indian people to gain independence. The Indian people resisted this ruthless onslaught and through travail

and agony demonstrated their will to freedom. The complete failure and incompetence of an out-of-date, political and administrative system resulted in famine, which took its toll of millions of lives.

"The end of the world war has not brought peace to the world and the appearance of the atom bomb as a weapon of war with its frightful and horrible powers of destruction has brought to a crisis the immoral and self-destructive elements of the present-day political, economic and spiritual structure of the world. Civilization is likely to destroy itself unless it gives up its imperialist and acquisitive tendencies and bases itself on the peaceful co-operation of free nations and on the maintenance of the dignity of man

In India as elsewhere, the period of transition from the old order which has demonstrated its failure to the new to which millions look with hope and for which they strive is full of peril, and reactionary forces are everywhere trying to prevent the establishment of a new order of peace and freedom.

"This Congress has always stood for the full co-operation of free nations and for the removal of political and economic inequality between nations and peoples. India has been and is to-day the crux of the problem of freedom of subject peoples. On the complete emancipation of the Indian people depends freedom of vast numbers of others in Asia, Africa and elsewhere. World peace and progress depend upon the solution of the Indian problem. The Congress therefore reiterates its firm determination to continue the

struggle for India's complete freedom till she becomes an independent nation, co-operating with others on an equal basis for the establishment of peace, freedom and progress everywhere. India, by virtue of her past, her present position and potential power, cannot accept the secondary position in the comity of nations

"For more than sixty years, the national Congress has led the people of India towards this ideal and through struggle and constructive effort it has built up the strength of the Indian people. It has based itself on high ideals and endeavoured to put before the moral standards of conduct, both on the individual and on the political plane, because it was convinced that greatness of achievement comes to a nation only by keeping high objectives before it and by pursuing methods which are worthy of a great people. In these days of bitter and tragic internal conflict and a lowering of these ideals, this Congress reiterates its faith in the high dignity of India and the ideals which have moved the Indian people

"Any weakness, complacency or straying from the straight path to freedom may well imperil the independence for which the people of India have struggled and which is now within their grasp

"The Congress, therefore, calls upon the people to put an end to internecine conflict and face internal and external dangers as a united people in the spirit in which they have fought in the past for India's independence. That struggle has not ended and may yet require many sacrifices "

IX

TRUE DEMOCRACY

Further definition of Congress objectives is contained in a resolution adopted by the Working Committee. It says —

'This Congress adopts the principles and programme' outlined in the Congress election manifesto in regard to the content of Swaraj. In the opinion of this Congress Swaraj cannot be real for the masses unless it makes possible the achievement of a society in which democracy extends from the political to the social and economic sphere, and in which there would be no opportunity for privileged classes to exploit the bulk of the people not for gross inequalities such as exist at present, such a society would ensure individual liberty equality of opportunity and the fullest scope for every citizen for the development of his personality."

Pandit Nehru proposing the resolution, on the objectives of the Congress stressed the need for drawing a balance-sheet of the past in order that we may have a clear picture of our objectives for the future. In thinking of the future he considered it strange that at a time when the country was at the threshold of freedom it should have to face difficulties not created by the alien Government but by ourselves. "We have faced the might of British Imperialism in the past but it is strange that we should be bewildered by internal problems.

There was a great deal of suspicion and recrimination, but what we should now do was not to apportion blame but to remove these suspicions and mutual accusations, which had lowered the prestige of the Congress. Nor by such means was the Congress going to build the great India of its dreams in which property and other evils would not exist. Elimination of foreign rule was not an end in itself. Greater tasks of reconstruction awaited the Congress and could not be carried out without understanding and internal unity.

The resolution regarding the implementation of the programme outlined in the Congress Election Manifesto was

moved by Mahatma Gandhi's Bengali disciple, Dr. Profulla Chandra Ghose who said that the Congress stands for the poor and the toiling millions and not the capitalists and zamindars, for he opposed the installation of the brown bureaucracy instead of the white one. Dr Kitchlew in a few sentences supported the resolution in two sentences followed by Prof Ranga, M L A (Central), who thought that the resolution would set at rest every criticism against the Congress by the so-called friends of the Kisans and workers. The resolution was adopted. Master Koturam's (M L A N - W F P) amendment having been ruled out

X

FOREIGN RULE MUST GO

The Congress, in a resolution reiterated its conviction that the only solution of the communal problem was complete independence from foreign control and appealed to the people not to allow communal passion to side-track the national struggle at this last stage of our march to freedom.

The following is the text of the resolution :

The Congress views with pain, horror and anxiety the tragedies of Calcutta, in East Bengal and in Bihar. The acts of brutality committed on men, women and children fill every decent person with shame and humiliation. These new developments in communal strife are different from any previous disturbances and have involved murders on a mass scale as also mass conversions enforced at the point of the dagger, abduction and violation of women and forcible marriage. These crimes, apparently for political purposes, put an end to all sense of security and are

ominous to the peace, tranquillity and progress of India.

The responsibility for this widespread brutality must rest with the preaching of hatred and violence for political purposes and the degradation and exploitation of religion for political ends. Responsibility must also rest with those who claim to possess special responsibilities and who in spite of warning failed to discharge them and allowed matters to proceed to the extreme limit of endurance.

The Congress would warn the country against all propaganda of violence and hate. It is not by these methods that the differences between the various communities in India can be settled. They can only be settled by peaceful means. The attempts of the Congress to work out a peaceful and just solution of the communal problem have been repeatedly thwarted by the Muslim League. The advocacy and use of violence will injure the interests of the country as a whole as well as sectional interests. The Congress also warns all communities against revenge and reprisals. The continuance of a vicious circle of reprisals would mean playing into the hands of the internal and external enemies of the nation.

The immediate problem is to produce a sense of security and rehabilitate houses and villages which have been broken up and destroyed. Women who have been abducted and forcibly married must be restored to their homes. Mass conversions which have taken place forcibly have no significance or validity and the people affected by them should be given every opportunity to return to their homes and to the life of their choice.

The Congress reiterates its conviction that the only solution of the communal problem is complete independence from foreign control and appeals to the people not to allow communal passion to sidetrack the national struggle at this last stage of our march to freedom

Pt. Pant had no hesitation in accusing the Viceroy and the Governors for not having discharged their special responsibilities and added "They seemed to be unconcerned and unmoved even when their attention was drawn to the prevailing conditions"

He, however, made it clear that they had to live in peace with each other and they must learn to do that themselves. He added every Government's duty was to keep peace and for doing that they must necessarily employ all means, including the use of police, army and even guns and do that ruthlessly against those who refuse to maintain peace and order.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who seconded the resolution, made a gentleman's speech and regretted the growing spirit of vindictiveness. He said it was their ill-luck that Hindus and Muslims were ceasing to act as gentlemen and madness was growing. Like Pt Pant, Rajen Babu asked the Hindus to assure full protection to their Muslim brethren wherever they are in minority. There was no other way to live in peace and he had no doubt that good Muslims, in their majority provinces would assure protection to their Hindu brethren. These communal outbreaks were a positive proof of the argument that so long as the British remained in India such things would not cease.

Maulana Hafizul Rehman asked Congressmen to realise their duty and responsibility in such horrible situations which exist and do their best to save the oppressed, be he Hindu or Muslim. He contended that the riots were a result of political exploitation.

Sh. Ramdulari in her amendment wanted to accuse the Congress High Command of responsibility for communal strife on account of their 'Chamberlain policy of appeasement of the League and suggested that the Muslim mass contact movement was the only remedy.

Munshi Ahmed Din, while condemning the League for having disgraced the fair name of Islam by inciting and keeping mum over the disgraceful doings, criticised the Sangh movement among the Hindus and said that that organisation was responsible for inciting the Hindus. He suggested jailing of all communalists as a remedy.

The Committee passed Pandit Pant's resolution on communal strife declaring the Congress conviction that the only solution of the communal problem is complete independence from foreign control and appealing to people not to allow communal passion to side track the nation's struggle at this last stage of our march to freedom.

VI

CONGRESS CONSTITUTION REVISED

A resolution passed on revision of the Congress constitution says

In view of the great development of the Congress organisation and the new conditions that have arisen, it is desirable to revise the Congress constitution in order to make the

Congress as widely representative of the Indian people as possible and at the same time a more efficient instrument for giving effect to the national will. With this end in view, the Congress authorises the All-India Congress Committee to amend and revise the Congress constitution on the basis of the following principles, (1) The four-anna membership to be abolished and instead a broader franchise approaching adult franchise be introduced. (2) All elective Congress committees to consist of workers in the field of constructive, organisational, parliamentary, or any other national activity (3) Elections to be held every three years

The constitution as and when finally passed by the A-I. C. C. shall be given effect to

Shari Shanker Rao Deo, former member of the Congress High Command who is mentioned as the likely new Congress Cabinet's General Secretary moved a resolution empowering the A-I C. C. to draw up a new Congress constitution so as to make the Congress as widely representative of Indian people as possible and while suggesting abolishing of the four-anna membership fee instead, have a broader franchise, and hold elections every three years, while all elective Congress Committees to consist of workers in the field of constructive organisational, parliamentary or any other national activity Shri Shanker Rao Deo said that a change was needed to make the Congress more representative and avoid quarrels among Congressmen

Pt Ramanand Misra moved amendments holding that abolishing of the four-anna membership would make the Congress weaker and adult franchise basis would provide

opportunity of communalists to come and capture the Congress and weaken it. He was supported by Mr. Abdul Ghami. Mr. Patil of Bombay though unopposed to the resolution, referred to practical difficulties on the way of actual working. He asked if four annas subscription was abolished from where will the money come.

Tandan Babu, United Provinces Speaker found out a *via media*, while agreeing with the views expressed on both sides, he drew up an amending resolution without containing any of the above three provisions regarding membership election. This amendment was accepted in fact and adopted by the mover Shri Shanker Rao whose original resolution was replaced by Tandan Babu's proposal which was accepted unanimously only one dissenting.

One member questioned the right of the Congress to delegate its powers to the A. I. C. C. President Kripalani warming up said "You can't question the Congress right. If the Congress wants to delegate its powers it can do so to anyone."

Mr. Jai Prakash Narain said he could not agree with most of the resolution. The conflict inside the Congress, he asserted, was not born of ideological differences but of ambition to occupy seats of authority in the organisation. Ideological differences were not in themselves wrong or dangerous. If however any idea existed that socialists were responsible for the internal conflicts then he was prepared to ask socialists not to accept any posts in the Congress organisation. Mr. S. K. Patil said "The Congress has pledged itself in socialism. What is there left that we should have all these

different parties, groups and quarrels among ourselves? Can we not forget these differences? No one who heard Pt Nehru's speech could imagine that we were out of the wood. Discipline and solidarity were needed now as never before. Not only was the war of independence not over but possibly the danger ahead was much graver than we imagined.

Mr Sureshchandra Misra (Forward Bloc) complained that the Congress had consistently ignored Leftist parties inside the Congress and appeased parties outside who had always worked against the country. The Congress, for instance, had never sent an invitation to the Forward Bloc, though the Forward Bloc had participated in all Congress struggles.

Master Mota Singh (Forward Bloc) said the ideology he supported aimed at taking the Congress to the forward line and he asked for Congress support for his programme of a parallel Government. He invited Sardar Patel, Pandit Nehru and others to resign from the Government and join the Forward Bloc. He was satisfied from the speech that Pandit Nehru would lead us towards the objectives that the Forward Bloc had before it.

Mr Shibbanlal Saxena (Leader of the Party of Revolutionary Congressmen) declared that India would never get independence from Britain by peaceful means. We should have to fight the British and resign from the Interim Government. Pt Nehru's speech showed that the Congress, after trying various experiments, had come back to the-

position it occupied eight years ago. Mr Saxena was happy at this

Mr R G Dubey stressed the need of better co-ordination between provincial Congress committees and provincial ministries.

Pandit Nehru winding up the debate said that critics had concentrated attention on one point in the resolution, namely—

Internal difficulties. Speakers had dealt with one per cent of the resolution and ignored 99 per cent of it. That way of treating the resolution was in his view symptomatic of our whole method of dealing with our problems. Pandit Nehru said we could not ignore the fact that there was corruption in Congress elections and in other matters. He did not believe in an inflexible attitude of no compromise under any conditions. We had to change our method of fight as our fight progressed. To remain for ever on the war path and in isolation from the surrounding circumstances was not the way of progressive and advanced countries. We had to fight or co-operate as conditions required.

We can resign in 12 hours if you ask us to do. We can then tread the path of war and undoubtedly, thousands will follow us. But will it be a sign of strength or weakness. We must take no steps that will not promote unity and strength.

The resolution was passed unanimously

XII

THE PROBLEM OF THE STATES

The Congress Working Committee passed the following resolution on States

The Congress has always considered the problem of the States in India as an integral part of the problem of Indian independence. On the eve of independence, this problem assumes a new urgency and has to be solved in the context of that independence. A few of the rulers of Indian States have appreciated the rapid changes taking place in the country and have tried to adapt themselves to some extent, to these changes.

But the Congress has noted with regret that even now many of the rulers of the Indian States and their Ministers are not only bringing their administrations into line even with the provinces in regard to representative institutions and effective popular control over the administration but, on the contrary, are endeavouring to crush the political aspiration of their people and are thus coming into conflict with the vital urge for freedom which animates the people of the States as well as the rest of India. Some of the larger States in India, which should have set an example to the rest are particularly guilty of these reactionary and repressive activities. The Political Department which still continues to be directly under the Crown representative and wholly beyond the control of the Government of India, continues to function in a way which is reactionary and opposed to the wishes of the people of the States.

The Congress views with strong disapproval this segregation of the Political Department from the Government of India, who are rightly interested in all the activities of that department, and hopes that this anomaly will be ended as early as possible. It considers it wholly untenable for

the British Government to claim through the Viceroy and Crown representative to have any interest in the States other than or apart from the Government of India.

The Congress disapproves of any schemes of merger or federation among States without reference to and without the approval of the people concerned. Such activities, often carried out secretly by the Political Department, without even knowledge of the people, are a negation of self-determination and of the right of the Indian people to determine their future. The Congress is firmly of opinion that every decision regarding the States must be taken by the elected representatives of the people of the States and no decision that ignores the people can be valid or binding upon them. In particular the representatives of the States in the Constituent Assembly should be chosen by their people.

In view of the growing evils in the States the Congress declares that it considers the struggle for freedom in the States an essential part of the large struggle in India. It views with sympathy the efforts of the people of the States to establish civil liberties and responsible government as integral parts of a free and independent India.

The Working Committee have previously expressed their disapproval of the activities of the Kashmir authorities during the past few months in repressing the people of the State and denying them their normal civil liberties. The Committee had proposed to send a deputation to inquire into these matters in Kashmir State and had invited the state authorities to co-operate in this task. The response

from those authorities was not satisfactory and conditions in various parts of India delayed any action being taken on the previous resolution. Recent reports state that the Kashmir authorities are preventing free and fair elections to the State Assembly and have arrested the President and members of the election committee of Kashmir National Conference. The committee take a serious view of this flouting of public opinion and of activities which must reduce the coming elections to a farce. The committee will now take early steps to implement their resolution.

XIII

FREEDOM IN SIGHT

“ We believe in a new world order based upon goodwill and co-operation. We believe that these objects can be achieved by an international organisation consisting of free and equal nations. We believe that so long as imperialism exists, whatever international organisation is devised for peace will inevitably be turned into an instrument of ambition by powerful and unscrupulous nations. It will not be based upon equality, justice and fair play, but upon the combined might of a few dominant nations. There will always be the Big Three, Four or Five. That way lies danger. International thieves and robbers, even as ordinary thieves and robbers, sooner or later, and sooner than later, fall out among themselves, and when they do they shake the very foundations of the earth, as they have done twice within the last thirty years. As long as there are dependent nations and peoples, so long will there be conflict and war ”, observed Acharya Kripalani, in the

course of his forceful presidential address to the Indian National Congress

He said Freedom, if not achieved is surely to sight. The British can no longer deny freedom to us whatever their intentions. If today we miss our goal the fault shall be ours. A reference to Mr Jinnah's decision not to join the Constituent Assembly was added by Acharya Kripalani in his extempore Urdu rendering of his presidential address, this evening. He said 'whether Mr Jinnah would ultimately attend the Constituent Assembly was known only to Mr Jinnah and to God. I doubt whether even God knows it. I doubt whether Mr Jinnah himself knows it. (Laughter) There were still fifteen days for the Constituent Assembly to meet and Mr Jinnah who changes his mind frequently may enter it after all

Led by the I N A band the Presidential procession started from the leaders camp at 1.45 p.m. and reached the Subjects Committee Pandal where the open session was held in fifteen minutes. The entire route was lined by Red Shirts and I N A men who held back under great pressure thousands of visitors rushing forward to have a glimpse of the leaders. There was a sudden rush towards the Leaders Gate as the procession entered the Pandal.

Punctually at 2 p.m. the Congress President entered the Pandal escorted in a procession led by ex Presidents including Maulana Azad Pandit Nehru Sardar Patel Mrs Sarojini Naidu and Dr Rajendra Prasad

The proceedings of the plenary session commenced with the singing of the National Anthem in chorus after which the Chairman of the Reception Committee welcomed the delegates in a very brief speech

A special feature of the Congress session at Meerut this time has been the participation of a large number of overseas Indians from different parts of the world

Among arrivals from abroad are Mr A S. Patel M L C (Fiji), Mr. Ayub Edun M L C. (British Guinea), Mr. J V Thivy, President Malayan Indian Congress, Sardar Sucha Singh (Malaya), Dr Abraham (Malaya), Mr Ayodhya Prasad (Fiji), Mr D Kapil (Kenya) and Mr Iqbal Singh (London)

Delegates and visitors numbering ten thousand, according to one estimate, sat in the Pandal, while thousands filled the approaches and pushed and jostled and milled round for vantage points from which to see and cheer the leaders as they entered in procession.

Loud speakers carried the speeches, to the gathering outside.

On the 'dais' inside the Pandal were grouped members of the Working Committee.

Others seated there included Mr. Bhabha, Sardar Baldev Singh, Mr T Prakasam, Mr M. S Aney, Mrs Naidu and Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya.

The Pandal was devoid of pictures or placards. Only a few Congress flags pinned above the gates and hanging from some of the posts supporting the Pandal added touches

of colour. The steps leading to the 'dais' were flanked by rows of mud-pots bearing mango sprigs.

Representatives of the India League, London, the Indian community in Fiji, the Malaya Indian Congress, the East African Indian National Congress and other Indian overseas organisations extended fraternal greetings to the Congress.

A resolution of condolences on the leaders who died during the last six and a half years was passed.

Ch. Raghuraj Narain Singh, Chairman Reception Committee, said that Meerut, where the first shots in the Mutiny of 1857 were fired, was proud of the honour of playing host to the annual session of the Indian National Congress. The power which had kept us enslaved, he said, was now weakening but had not lost all strength as was shown by the happenings during Pandit Nehru's tour of the Frontier.

Referring to the disturbances in Noakhali and Bihar, he said that our leaders were trying hard to put an end to them but the power to incite violence was often greater than the power to check it. The disturbances had spread to Meerut and had forced on us a purely businesslike session. He, however, asserted that the city of Meerut had no share of responsibility for some of the dreadful things done in certain parts of the district. He extended a warm welcome to the delegates and asked their indulgence for any shortcomings.

XIV

FIRST RESOLUTION

Pandit Nehru moved the main resolution of the session. It was the one passed by the Subjects Committee giving a retrospect of the events during the past six and a half years and appealing for internal unity

Pandit Nehru spoke with warmth on the movement of 1942—which he described as a year of storm, suffering and sacrifice—and the part played by the official world in dealing with it

“I can never forget the part played by British as well as Indian officers in that year. I realise their position and am prepared to sympathise with them. But those who were responsible for the atrocities committed on the people must not escape punishment.” He called the attention of provincial Premiers and ministers to this matter. He wanted the Viceroy also to take note of it.

“The British Government in England might be true to their promises, but they had to depend on their agents in India and be guided by their advice. The British in India talked of quitting India, but at the same time plotted to impede our programme. But they are not the only enemy. We have enemies in our camp. We must weed out corruption and defeat these enemies in the final struggle for India’s liberation (cheers)”

Pt Pant seconded the resolution.

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ORGANISE AGAINST HOOLIGANS

A stern call to Indians to organise self-defence against

hooligans was uttered by Sardar Patel, who made a fighting speech in moving the next resolution, ratifying the Working Committee's and A. I. C. C.'s decisions leading to the formation of the Interim Government.

XVI

POSITION OF LEAGUE

Referring to the position of the League, Sardar Patel quoted extensively from the letters of the Viceroy published to-day particularly the one dated October 23, 1946, in which His Excellency conveyed the assurance given to him by Mr. Jinnah that the Muslim League would come into the Interim Government and the Constituent Assembly with the intention of co-operating. The Congress accepted the Cabinet Mission's proposals on the solemn declaration of the Prime Minister Attlee that no minority would be allowed to veto the progress towards independence.

Mr. Jinnah as the House knew rejected the Interim Government proposals at first, but later came in on the plea that Muslim interests demand the League's entry.

Similarly I know that the League will come into the Constituent Assembly on the same plea.

What was being done to-day was with the object of getting the Congress out of the Interim Government. We shall not allow ourselves to be caught in this net. We joined the Government with the firm determination to remain there. We have no intention of leaving it ourselves (cheers). The only way to make us leave it is to dismiss us or to convince us that continuance in it is futile.



Comrades-in-arms —President Kripalani welcoming home Pandit Nehru & Sardar Baldev Singh on their return from the historic trip to London in the first week of December, 1946

Umberalla In Politics —Umberalla made a very bad history in politics when Chamberlain went down on his knees before Hitler. Acharya Kripalani, going to attend a meeting of the Subjects Committee in this snapshot, is not an advocate of peace-at any-cost with Mr M A Jinnah.





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Disciplined Democracy — Acharya Kripalani and Pandit Nehru review a volunteer corps of young men at Meerut know the value of discipline without which Democracy is reduced to mobocracy

Democratic Discipline — A Volunteer Corps of young women, a guard of honour to Acharya Kripalani and Pandit Nehru, amply illustrates that the ladies of India are capable of maintaining democratic discipline in Free India



XVII

LEAGUE EXPOSED

It had been stated on behalf of the Muslim League that they objected to the description of Pandit Nehru as Vice-President of the Cabinet. League spokesmen had earlier stated that the Vice-President had no special position in the Cabinet. If so, why did the League ask for the appointment of Hindu and Muslim members as Vice-Presidents by rotation (laughter). The fact is that in spite of all that the League might say, it is a Cabinet and it is known to the world at large as the Nehru Cabinet or the Congress Cabinet (cheers).

It has been recognised as a Cabinet by the British Government.

Recalling the Bengal Governor's statement that India had attained 15-anna independence and that only one anna still remained, Sardar Patel announced that the 15-anna independence had only given us complete freedom to kill each other. The Governor had witnessed the killing in Calcutta and yet had merely stated that the Ministry had full power to deal with the situation. But the Bengal Ministry did nothing and the people took the law into their hands. The Interim Government was asked to provide police and military protection. Leaders from Bengal came to him and asked for intervention. He told them the Centre had no power and that they had the Centre's moral support.

Referring to the Calcutta killing, Sardar Patel observed " Even the death of thirty lakhs of people in the Bengal famine

did not grieve me so much as the forcible conversions. Death is any day preferable to forcible conversion. But did any Muslim leader raise his voice against these forcible conversions?

Two or three Muslims among the delegates stood up at this point to object to the statement that no Muslim leader had protested against forcible conversions.

Sardar Patel said that all the remarks he had made were against Muslim League leaders.

After Bihar, the League was suggesting transference of population. You are welcome to it. But remember this was what Hitler tried to do. And if you do it, the same fate that overtook Hitler will overtake you.

He appealed in God's name for a stoppage of the disturbances. Pakistan cannot be achieved by the sword or by bloodshed. If you want to get Pakistan by this means then there will be no peace in India, he said.

Mr. Keshkar, General-Secretary, A. I. C. C. supporting the resolution said that the steps referred to in the resolution were taken after mature deliberation and deserved a fair trial.

Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali who opposed the resolution, said: We should have met to-day to approve a complete abandonment of the path of compromise (cheers). She referred to Tilak, Gandhi and other personalities and said that revolutionaries like them had succeeded every time they came into conflict with orthodox Congressmen. Only recent there had been no victory of the revolutionaries.

Hakim Abdul Jalil Nadvi of the Frontier Province opposed Sardar Patel's resolution. Shrimati Ram Durarl Singh opposed and Mr Jagat Narain Lal supported the resolution.

Sardar Patel replying reiterated his conviction that the sword must be met by the sword. Mahatma Gandhi has said, that it was better to use violence than to be a coward. Non-violence, said Sardar Patel, was a weapon which it was beyond the power of ordinary man to use and, therefore, he urged people to adopt violence in self-defence and only in self-defence, or in defence of neighbours. He gave this advice, because there was no Government at the Centre at present. The present Central Government during the transference of power was in a state of paralysis (laughter)

He denied that by being in the Interim Government they were co-operating with the British Government. The British were quitting and were we co-operating with them if we helped them to pack their belongings? (Laughter)

The resolution was passed

The Congresss passed the last resolution of the day on Acharya Narendra Deo's motion. The resolution declared the Congress stand for an independent sovereign republic on the eve of the summoning of the Constituent Assembly. Acharya Narendra Deo was supported by Rao Saheb Patwardhan and opposed by Mr Suresh Chandra Misra, and the resolution was adopted.

XVIII

CONGRESS MANIFESTO

Mr Jai Prakash Narain moved the resolution on the

'Congress manifesto. He urged the President of the Congress to convene a meeting of the All India Congress Committee soon which should continue for about a week to settle the mandate to be given to Congress representatives in the Constituent Assembly. He urged that members of the A. I. C. C. and not the Congress members of the Constituent Assembly who were competent to decide the shape of Swaraj in the light of the Congress manifesto.

Earlier speakers had said that a section of Congressmen did not approve the Socialist form of government but his resolution embodied ideals which were acceptable both to Gandhites and Socialists alike. The Congress election manifesto which was adopted by the resolution aimed 'inter alia' at removing the curse of poverty and of raising the standard of living.

Prof. N. G. Ranga seconding the resolution, described it as the culmination of the organic growth of the political ideology and of practice of the Indian National Congress under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. Many of its features were contained in the Congress election manifesto but he knew from bitter experience how difficult it was to make many of our legislators—like legislators all over the world—to keep election pledges. It should now be the duty of the Congress Working Committee and the Congress President to see that the Congress parties in the various legislatures enforced the manifesto loyally and zealously.

The manifesto said Prof. Ranga, showed that the Congress stood not only for political democracy but also for economic and social democracy.

Mr Mathra Prasad Misra moved an amendment suggesting the adoption of the principles and programme not only of the election manifesto but also of the August resolution.

Mr Shanker Rao Deo, held that the resolution represented a synthesis of Gandhism and Socialism

Mr. Jai Prakash Narain in a brief reply said that it was clear it had brought people of different shades of opinion on the same platform.

Mr. Mathra Prasad Misra's amendment was adopted and the resolution as amended was passed

XIX

COMMUNAL SITUATION

Dr Rajendra Prasad moved the resolution on the communal situation. He said the happenings in the country were such as to make us hang our heads down in shame. It was the duty of every Congressman to stop them and to carry the message of harmony to the furthest corner. It was unfortunate that while Indians had exercised self-restraint in carrying on their fight with the foreign government, they should have lost self-control in dealing with their domestic differences.

He recognised that when one side preaches violence, it became difficult for the other side to defend itself with non-violence. But there could be no excuse for retaliation which brought misery to the innocent.

He urged that immediate attention be given to bringing relief to the victims of the riots.

XX

FACE OR PERISH

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad seconding the resolution urged that the Congress should now squarely face up to the communal situation or perish. It was true that communal riots had occurred in the past and to our misfortune had recurred at frequent intervals. Occasional sparks had now started a forest fire, threatening to consume all of us.

The Congress had a special responsibility in dealing with the present situation.

"If you are a part of the Congress, you do not give up your faith. But whether you are a Hindu or a Muslim you must share the blame or the credit for whatever happens.

The first thing that every Congressman, Hindu and Muslim should do was to look towards and put to ourselves the question 'Am I free from bitterness in my mind?'

Though we feel helpless in the face of the situation, we must remember that the only organisation that can deal with it is the Congress (cheers). As a national organisation it constitutes in itself the antidote to the present malady. If the Congress fails to live up to its own ideals and eradicate this communal canker then it will disintegrate and vanish." The Congress should bear the burden of protecting all. To the Congressmen it should not matter whether it was a Hindu or a Muslim who was in danger. We should remember that the Congress insisted on having a Muslim in the Cabinet even at the sacrifice of a Hindu seat, in order to live up to its ideal of a national non-communal organisation.

If Congressmen in East Bengal had stood fast by their true ideals, as they should have done, the tragedy there would not have occurred, as it did. In Bihar, wherever Congressmen worked for the restoration of peace, the disturbances subsided. He had himself heard Muslims express surprise at the suddenness with which the trouble stopped in parts of Bihar as soon as Congressmen exerted their influence.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, supporting the resolution, said that whatever wrongs were done either by Hindus or Muslims, were entered in Congress account. In fact, however, the Congress could not know of or foresee every disturbance, particularly when, as at the time of the recent disturbances, Congressmen were busy with other affairs.

In his view, communal organisations in the country, which carried on poisonous propaganda were responsible for the present situation. But such poisonous propaganda did its work because Congressmen were not alert enough to counteract it. Unfortunately there were few Muslims in the Congress and, therefore, the Congress could not reach the Muslim masses. If we have the leaders to go to the Muslim masses with the message of peace and love and goodwill, trouble would not have occurred.

Nevertheless the Congress should win over all those who had turned away from it. We should prevent the drift towards Fascism, which the Fascism of the Muslim League, with its emphasis on the philosophy of hatred and violence had, according to Pandit Nehru, set in motion among other sections of the people. The Congress had taken the respon-

sibility of achieving independence. It must win back those who had gone astray. He was sure it could succeed.

Referring to his province, he said that it was by non-violence that it had been saved. If there was one spark of violence in that province from the side of the Khudai Khidmatgars or the Congress, he did not know what would have happened. The British Government was bent upon creating mischief and had worked hard to create mischief. It had backed the League and had invited it to carry on propaganda among the tribesmen while Congressmen were forbidden from entering the area. He requested the Interim Government to give them permission to contact the tribesmen and counteract this poisonous propaganda.

The Congress Ministry in the province had responsibility without power. The premier of the province arranged for the visits of the Vice President of the Interim Government and also its President (the Viceroy) and the difference in the reception given to them demonstrated the truth of his statement about responsibility without power.

Earlier supporting the resolution on the communal situation moved by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pandit Nehru referred to a note which he had received in the Congress session from a delegate holding Pandit Nehru responsible for thousands of Hindu lives lost in Bihar as a result of alleged air bombing. Pandit Nehru categorically denied reports of bombing in Bihar during the disturbances and described the circumstances under which about 24 men of a Madras Regiment came to a clash on half a dozen occasions.

with a crowd of 2,500 Hindus who were involved in a pitched battle with 1,200 Muslims in a place called "Nagarnosa." The regiment was entrusted with the task of evacuating 1,200 Muslims to a place of safety. According to army sources about 40 people were killed but unofficial sources estimated the death toll between 50 and 60. His enquiry revealed that in the communal clashes at Nagarnosa about 25 Muslims and between ten and fifteen Muslims were killed in three days' clashes. He was shocked at the exaggerated figures of casualties in Bihar circulated by interested parties.

Pandit Nehru traced the genesis of the communal trouble in the country and the deterioration that had occurred in the last ten years. He said that the Muslim League adopted Fascist tactics. Their strategy was based on the Hitlerian technique and had many things in common with Hitler methods. Muslim League leaders, like Hitler, indulged in a hymn of hatred and violence. The League had no constructive or economic programme for the country or for the Muslim masses. The League had never clarified their position because its leaders had always shelved discussion or questions which might falsify their claims to represent all sections of the Muslim population.

Pandit Nehru said that a prominent member of the League Council told him that he once asked Mr. Jinnah to place the League's constructive programme before the Muslim masses, but Mr. Jinnah replied that any such programme would lead to differences and disruption in the League ranks. Hatred of Hindus was a uniting force. Mr. Jinnah said :

The programme of the League was to preach hatred against the Congress and Hindus. '

Pandit Nehru went on I am not afraid of bloodshed. The present civil strife in the country has no doubt moved me but it has to be faced with a brave heart. I hope the situation will improve. It is true that incidents in one part of the country have repercussion in other parts. Congress has faced many a danger in the past and will not shirk its responsibility in a crisis like this even though some of us may have to lose our lives.

He declared that the Fascist policy of the League was giving birth to rival Fascism which he termed as "Hindu Fascism". All types of Fascism exploited the name of religion and his fear was that the growing Hindu Fascism possessed all the dangerous potentialities of Muslim League Fascism. Both were the enemies of the unity and progress of India. Congress, Pandit Nehru said had liquidated British Fascism and it was his conviction that it would similarly deal with the two pronged Indian Fascism which threatened to wipe out our proud culture and civilization.

A series of amendments were ruled out or rejected and the resolution was passed.

The last resolution of the session namely one on amendments to the constitution was put from the chair and adopted.

XXI

NEW CONGRESS EXECUTIVE

Acharya J. B. Kripalani the Congress President,

announced the names of members of the Working Committee as follows,—

1. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad,
2. Sri Jawaharlal Nehru,
3. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,
4. Mrs Sarojini Naidu,
5. Sri Rajendra Prasad,
6. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan,
7. Sri Sarat Chandra Bose
8. Sri C. Rajagopalachariar,
9. Sri Shanker Rao Deo,
10. Shrimati Kamala Devi,
11. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai,
12. Sri Jai Prakash Narain,
13. Sardar Partap Singh,
14. Sri Jugal Kishore (U. P.)

Sri Shankar Rao Deo and Acharya Jugal Kishore will be General Secretaries and Sri Vallabhbhai Patel will continue as Treasurer

Announcing the names of the Congress Working Committee, Acharya Kripalani, in a statement to the press, says :—
“ Convention required me to announce the personnel of the Working Committee in the A-I.C.C. meeting. I am sorry I could not do this. The reason is obvious. If my distinguished predecessors found the task of selecting their colleagues difficult, I have found it much more so. They had in this unenviable task the advice and guidance of Gandhiji of which his absence has deprived me. My difficulties

were further enhanced by the fact that my predecessor in office, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, had infused considerable new blood in the committee. Jawaharlalji is a great leader. He can instruct and guide. With his personality and prestige he can shoulder the responsibility of his colleagues and if need be, stand alone. I have not all these advantages. I can feel secure only with old and tried colleagues. Yet I was loathed to undo what my predecessors had done so recently. Therefore, in selecting names I have made the fewest possible changes.

I had also to keep in mind the fact that it was the wish of the A. I. C. C. that not more than a third of the personnel of the Working Committee should consist of those who are holding Government offices as members of the Central and Provincial Cabinets.

XII

SIDELIGHTS AT MEERUT

Two orders of the day were issued before the Subjects Committee resumed its sitting. Dr. Keekar, General Secretary, said "No smoking please unless you get an ash tray because a number of durries and mats were found with holes caused by burning cigarette pieces thrown carelessly around. A few huts also caught fire. So no smoking please."

Pandit Nehru intervened seemingly annoyed. He said "But why smoke at all in the Pandal? Those who can't do without smoking can move out for that purpose."

Thus however, he added, he was saying out of no other consideration or principle than the consideration of safety.

One A.-I.C.C. member remarked: "you may have to make exception on your right and left."

As the first resolution was moved by Pandit Nehru, President Kripalani felt dismayed finding the copies of the translated resolution unavailable to the members of the A.-I.C.C. He said that even the cyclostyle machine had refused to work. What could be done? Acharya Kripalani also thought that volunteers could not do the work of distribution of the copies of the resolution and asked the Secretaries to do that job instead of keeping on sitting.

Mr Suresh Misra, Member, A.-I.C.C. sent a chit to the President asking permission to speak on behalf of the Forward Bloc.

President Kripalani said: "Sorry, Forward Bloc has no position here as such but if Mr. Misra wants to speak as a member of the A.-I.C.C. he can surely do so."

Master Mota Singh, who spoke next, claimed that he himself was a Forward Blocist and his desire was to see the Congress going forward. He added: "We don't want even our constitutionalists in the Interim Government to take oath of allegiance to the King. He began explaining his speech and was pulled up by the President.

Master Mota, Singh replied "I will now proceed".

The President said "Was all that a preface?"

Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, replying to the debate, on the State resolution referred to Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar as "the prize boy of bureaucracy who has the audacity to tell

the State people that if you ask for more you will lose all you have.

To Aruna, Dr Pattabhi said We are on the turning corner and the safety rule lays down that at the turning corner every motorist must drive slowly and be ready to apply brakes at a second's notice

The Bengal Governor's convocation in address at the Dacca University in defence of the British intentions attracted the High Command's notice. Maulana Azad Pt. Nehru, Sardar Patel and other members were seen reading that speech carefully

Acharya Kripalani succeeded in killing several amendment, whose notice had been given, by good humour and jokes at the cost of their movers

'Our homage to that great unending line of martyrs who laid down their lives in the service of the motherland in order to liberate her—that line which commenced with the fighters of India's freedom in 1857 and has continued since then to the martyrs of 1942 said Pandit Nehru while unveiling Pandit Pt. Lala Lajpat Rai's statue (after whose name the Congress Nagar has been named)

Pandit Nehru joined the I N A. chorus 'Bharat Bhagya Subhaga and sang while receiving the salute at the statue unveiling ceremony

While Mr Patwardhan was appearing one madman dressed in khaki clothes resembling the volunteers uniform appeared on the dais and began blowing his whistle This created in the Pandal some trouble and volunteers rushed

out. But within the next half minute Pandit Nehru pounced upon that man, catching him by his collar amidst loud laughter, handed him over to the volunteers. Panditji admonished Doctor Keskar, General Secretary, for not making adequate arrangements to prevent such men coming up the dais

Pandit Nehru made a fighting speech in reply to the Socialists' speeches. Warming up every tune, he referred to their criticism as "Dhokabazi". Replying to Mr Patwardhan, Pandit Jawaharlal said "If any friend thinks that the Congress sympathises with Spain but not with Indian States, he does not seem to know anything about the Congress though he be knowing much about Spain and America" Pandit Nehru's plea for not mentioning the names of the erring States in the resolution was that those States that were left out might at once feel that they were blemishless which really they were not. If the full list were incorporated then the resolution might be drowned in the unending stream of names.

Underground revolutionaries and the Congress Socialist chief, Mr. Jaiprakash Narayan, moved a resolution adopting the programme of the Congress Election manifesto rather hesitatingly though he asserted that he was not unmindful of the criticism

Some books were confiscated to Rashtrapati's Congress Government in the Pandal. These books were snatched away from a girl volunteer under the President's orders while she was selling them in the Pandal

While Mr Jaiprakash was moving his resolution, the President, who sat on the chair in oriental fashion on the rostrum close by looked like sitting in 'Samadhi, some people thought he was dozing too

Sardar Patel referring to the opposition of his resolution by two women speakers, Aruna and Ramdantari who claimed to represent a revolutionary view, said British Government is preparing to quit India. They must quit, there is no doubt. But our revolutionary friends seem to tell them 'Don't go don't quit now. We will create a 'revolution.

Kripalani has been described as —

Jolliest President of driest session in history cracks two jokes a minute. Also at Gandhi. Can tell anecdotes and stories like a grand mother and smile, laugh and grim according to the force of the expression needed. Put proceedings through at express speed even while lying on the Gaddi fully-stretched supported by Sucheta Devi on one side and Patel on the other. Presidential election no surprise as it was result of twenty five years of hard work for Gandhi and Gandhism. Speaks bad Hindustani and good English. Can be rude to everybody on occasion. No surrendering to League. Thoroughly sound in health, jokes at wife and more at himself

CHAPTER V

Kripalaniji Speaks to the Nation !

The magnificent address delivered by Acharya Kripalanji at the Meerut Session of the Congress in December, 1946 is the marvel of condensed political strategy. It is also the thunder of speech in restraint. Few leaders have had such a command of language and such mastery of political facts which Kripalanji has imbibed through decades of selfless and ceaseless service and sacrifice as the General Secretary of the Indian National Congress. The entire address is reproduced here without abridgement because the speech of Kripalanji is the very essence of Kripalanji himself. It should be read not only between the lines but also between the words. For any serious student of Indian politics, it is an indispensable document, because for long Kripalanji has been the Permanent Under-Secretary of the Congress Presidents, and he knows strengths and weaknesses of the Congress better than any other leader.

The following is the full text of Acharya Kripalanji's presidential address —

Friends —

I am grateful for the honour you have conferred on me by electing me to preside over your deliberations this year. I am not so vain as to imagine that I am the fittest person for this signal distinction, nor will I insult you out of mistaken modesty by suggesting that you have elected one who is altogether unworthy of the task you have called upon him, to undertake. Our veteran leaders, who have filled this office

with distinction in the past have now other burdens to shoulder and are no longer free exclusively to devote themselves to the service of this organisation. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who piloted our ship through the most perilous voyage it has yet undertaken in its story and hazardous career needed much-deserved respite from the cares of office. I was free to devote myself to your service, and you have chosen me as your first servant. Though I am fully sensible of the great honour I am even more sensible of the great responsibility it carries. Gandhiji has called it a crown of thorns and a crown of thorns it is, more so to-day than ever. Our ship is nearing the harbour which has been so heavily mined. But I have no doubt that if we remain true to our mission and if we stand united, no power on earth can prevent us from reaching our goal.

I

RETROSPECT

We are meeting after full six years—years momentous in the history of the world and no less momentous in the history of our own struggle for freedom. During the period, we came twice into open conflict with the British Government. In 1941 we started the Individual Civil Disobedience movement to vindicate the right of every Indian freely to express his opinion about the war in which India was dragged against her will. It succeeded in attaining this limited objective.

II

QUIT INDIA

The second was the all-comprehensive Quit India struggle. When the Congress on 1st January 1930 re-defined its goal as the attainment of Purna Swaraj or complete independence, it was a notice to the foreigner to quit

But it was an indefinite notice ignored by him and not enforced by us. But as conveyed in 1942, it was a peremptory order to quit. Caught in the net of her own imperialist ambitions, Britain had involved herself in a second world war. She was ill-prepared for a major conflict, and soon found herself in a life-death struggle. Her reaction to it on the different fronts is a lesson in democracy. While on her own soil where the people were sovereign, she rose heroically to the occasion, despite the fact that the threat there was the most serious, here in India where her rule was enforced against the wishes of the people, she lost her nerve and grew panicky and demoralised. Frightened by the threat of Japanese invasion, the authorities drove out people from their homes and fields, destroyed their crops and even deprived them of their means of livelihood. The people so harassed could not even complain. All channels of free expression and associations, the platform and the press, were effectively gagged by virtual martial law. The choice before the country was to suffer all these indignities lying low, or to take up the challenge and offer resistance. The Congress could not possibly ignore this challenge. If it had, it would have acted as the Social Democratic Parties did in European countries, threatened with Fascist and Nazi aggression. Social Democracy failed ingloriously without striking a blow in the defence of its ideal. Gandhiji, at the time of this supreme crisis, decided to take up the challenge. He invited the Congress to die fighting, if necessary. The Congress and the nation had the wisdom to follow his lead.

III

GANDHI-IN-ARMS

Many wise politicians shook their heads in doubt. For an unarmed people to fight Great Britain at a time when all

its armed might was mobilised when the inexhaustible resources of America were at its disposal appeared a sheer folly. But then these wise men forgot that when the Congress under Gandhiji's lead took to revolutionary politics, it abandoned conventional political wisdom. It dared to risk and achieve. Was the Congress wise when it scarcely understood its own? Was it again wise to resort to Salt Satyagraha to achieve independence? There was apparently no connection between salt and independence. And what wisdom could there have been in Gandhiji walking with a flock of unarmed followers for 21 years to pick up a pinch of salt on the sea shore? What political or any other wisdom could there be in Pandit Motilal Nehru manufacturing salt in his study in a laboratory test tube over a spirit lamp from a lump of clay? What wisdom was there in selecting individual satyagrahis to walk from place to place shouting anti war slogans till they were arrested? The fact is the Congress under Gandhiji's lead has never done the conventionally obvious thing and if it does so before the freedom fight is over and complete independence won, it will have missed its revolutionary role.

After every moment, it has seemed that the Congress lay exhausted and prostrate. The foreign Government thought it crushed for good. But after this seemingly defeated Congress, when occasion arose showed itself more alive than ever and ready to exercise the added strength it had gathered from its sufferings and sacrifices.

IV

THE MARCH OF TRIUMPH

The August 1942 struggle was over. The British had not disappeared. They were there. The nation appeared to be prostrate. In those dark days many a false prophet

taunted "Did we not say so?" But as soon as the jail gates were opened on Gandhiji and the members of the Working Committee, there was no sign of either depression or frustration. What we saw was a new and singing life everywhere. The leader's march to Simla to negotiate with a Government that had boasted that the Congress was crushed was a triumphant march and not the march of the defeated and humiliated. Then came the elections, central and provincial. Nobody had any doubt the result. Those who had seen no wisdom in Congress politics lost no time in coming back to the fold and offered themselves for Assembly seats and positions of Power which they thought might soon be available. They did not want to be left behind. They hurried back to the fold and were accepted too.

V

THE NATION'S FAITH

The elections proved that the nation's faith in the Congress had increased. Those who had fought and suffered triumphed. They had their reward. But many of those who had striven most and suffered most were no more with us. They paid for their patriotism with their precious lives. To-day when we are assembled to take stock of the past and shape policies for the future, let us forget to pay to the memory of these brave soldiers in the national struggle, whether known or unknown, our humble tribute of honour and respect. They suffered that others may enjoy. They died that others may live.

VI

THE SIMLA CONFERENCE AND AFTER

The members of the Working Committee were released in June, 1945 in pursuance of a change in the policy

of the British Government. The Viceroy called a conference at Simla of representatives of the main political parties to discuss the formation of a National Government at the Centre. The Conference failed because it was not allowed to function. The Viceroy chose to yield to the fanciful demands of the Muslim League even though he did not think them fair and reasonable. The League Leader would not allow any non-League Muslim, even a non Congress Muslim a nominee of the Viceroy, to be included in the Cabinet. It was difficult to understand why the Conference was ever called at such expense and trouble. There was disappointment and anger in the country. Many asked how could those pledged to the 'Quit India' resolution consent to a conference called on the basis of the present reactionary constitution. But a Satyagrahi is slow to fight and quick to come to terms when he sees an opportunity for a peaceful and honourable solution. If his fundamentals are conceded he is willing to sit at the table with his opponents to discuss matters. Moreover at this time the food problem was becoming acute and it was expected that a National Government could tackle it much better than the bureaucracy that had so woefully bungled in the past. The country also needed a period of quiet and rest to take stock of the national situation.

VII

THE BRITISH WORK FOR TIME

The Simla Conference failed but the British Government announced that soon they would devise some other workable plan for the solution of the Indian problem. The British bureaucracy is a slow-moving machine. Moreover the British always work for time. A favourable turn

in the home or international situation may enable them to avoid inconvenient commitments. However, there was no favourable turn. The general elections in England went against the reactionary Tories. Labour came in power with an overwhelming majority. The International situation was charged with dangerous possibilities. India was the weakest spot in the Empire. A solution was called for. A roving Parliamentary Committee came for the purpose of study and inquiry. On its heels came the Cabinet Mission headed by the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick-Lawrence. After a series of discussions with leaders of the main political parties, the Cabinet Mission announced their plan, in their Statement of May 16, 1946 for the convening of a Constituent Assembly to frame a Constitution of a free and united India and for the establishment of an interim Government at the Centre.

VIII

THE WEARY NEGOTIATIONS

The history of the weary negotiations that went on for nearly three months in Delhi and Simla is too well-known for me to repeat here. The net result was that though the plan for the Constituent Assembly was accepted by both Congress and League no interim Government could be formed at the Centre. The League leaders were so disappointed at the refusal of the Viceroy to invite them to form the Government without the Congress that they afterwards announced that the Muslim League would not participate even in the Constituent Assembly. The Viceroy, there, in consultation with the British Cabinet, decided to invite the Congress as the majority party to form the interim Government. The task of bringing the Muslim League in was wisely left to the Congress. The

Congress accepted the offer and the President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru contacted Mr Jinnah. But as usual nothing could be gained from that quarter. The Congress was therefore constrained to accept office in November 1946.

Soon the Viceroy began talks with the League leaders on his own initiative, without the consent of his colleagues in the Cabinet. Such a procedure was not contemplated. The offer made to the Congress was unconditional. Nevertheless the Congress always willing and anxious for unity did not object. Through the Viceroy the Congress and the League resumed negotiations. The result again was a failure. However in the end the League accepted the Viceroy's invitation to nominate five out of fourteen members in the interim Government. Thus the League representatives are to-day in the National Government working as colleagues with our own representatives. It is hoped that facing the same difficulties and solving the same problems a working unity will be evolved that will carry us over these troublous times.

IX

CONSTRUCTIVE REVOLUTION

I believe that if the Congress had not taken up the challenge of British imperialism in August, 1942 we would not be occupying the position we do to-day. Nor indeed would the Muslim League and other minorities though some of them may not like to admit the fact. True we have not yet achieved our goal of Purna Swaraj. But our representative and leaders have broken into the citadel of power. This is not the end of foreign domination but it is surely the beginning of the end, provided we know

how to utilise our opportunities. However, even when we have achieved our goal of complete independence we must not think our task is done. National liberty is precious indeed. It is the very branch of a nation's life. But however important, it is a negative achievement—a removal of external shackles. It is merely the hindrance of a hindrance. It is quite possible that when an individual's shackles are removed he may use his new-found freedom to his own injury. If we are wise we will not rest content merely with the removal of external restraints, but will so order our affairs that the freedom we gain is translated into concrete good to our people. This means that our revolutionary zeal, even while it destroys the old order must constantly achieve expression in constructive activity.

The constructive effort should be nothing new for us. Our revolutionary moment, based as it is on non-violence, is unique in history. Usually political revolutions have aimed at the destruction of the old order. Their strategy has been designed to capture power. All constructive efforts to remould the nation's life has been done after the old order was completely destroyed and power captured. This process has inevitably led not to one but a series of revolutions before things could settle down and constructive efforts begun. Not unoften, the process has led to civil war and ultimately to dictatorship that have a tendency to defeat the aims of a revolution. It was so in the French and Russian revolutions.

X

THE LEADERSHIP OF GANDHI

The Congress under Gandhiji's lead has avoided over-emphasis on mere destruction or on the capture of power.

It has, on the other hand, laid great emphasis on constructive programme. Its destructive and constructive programmes have been worked side by side for the last 26 years. Indeed for Gandhiji the only effective preparation for civil disobedience is the intensive carrying out of the Constructive programme. Now that Congressmen are at the helm of affairs in many provinces and even at the Centre we have some sort of a national government, it should not be difficult to intensify our effort and realise the full possibilities of the constructive programme as enunciated by Gandhiji and accepted by the Congress.

XI

DEMOCRACY AND NON VIOLENCE

The content of our Swaraj has been getting clearer and clearer for us as long ago we decided against the tactics of mere destruction and capture of power. We therefore discarded the use of the pistol and the bomb. We decided that our revolution must be an open conspiracy and it must progressively bring in the masses. It must therefore necessarily be non-secretive and non violent. A revolution brought about by the masses and that non violently implies democracy. Our Congress organisation therefore has a democratic constitution. As a matter of fact, if democracy is to be real and effective, and not merely formal and institutional it must be based on non violence. And non violence if it is not a mere form or lip-expression, must necessarily lead to democracy. Non violence and dictatorship are contradictory. We cannot to-day change this democratic character of the Congress nor will it be desirable to do so. Let it therefore be clear that we are pledged to political democracy and our Swaraj shall be democratic. It shall not be the rule of an individual however

glorious. Nor shall it be the Swaraj under one particular caste, creed or class. It shall be the rule of the people, by the people, for the people.

XII

THE POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

We have seen that political democracy the world over tends to become a mere form, if it is not broadbased on some sort of economic equality. The democratic note ceases to have much meaning in a society where there are great inequalities of wealth. We know that the smaller countries of Europe, like Norway, Sweden and Denmark, enjoy a more real democracy than the big capitalist countries for the simple reason that their democracy rests on a larger measure of economic equality.

But economic equality may be of the communist order based on centralised big industry, or it may be democratic and based upon a fair degree of decentralisation. I believe that economic equality in a society, whose economic system rests exclusively on big industry, inevitably leads to the concentration of power in the hands of a few. It leads to bureaucratic and dictatorial exercise of power. The rulers in that case not only regulate the political but also the 'economic' life of the people. If political power has a tendency to corrupt the holders of power, this tendency is doubly increased by the combination of political and economic power in the same hands. Capitalism killed democracy because the capitalist class wielded, directly or indirectly, political power. Communism puts in the hands of the political dictator and bureaucrat the entire control of economic power. Herein lies as great a danger to democracy as under capitalism.

XIII

DECENTRALISATION OF INDUSTRY

Therefore if democracy is to survive it must discover a means of avoiding concentration of economic power in the hands of the rulers however selected or elected. Even a political democracy can be a dictatorship if there are no spheres of free activity left to the individual. The historical role of the Congress in the economic field has its bold advocacy of decentralised industry. Ever since the Bengal Partition movement, our political thinkers have stressed the importance of reviving village and cottage industry. After Gandhiji's advent in Indian politics, this advocacy has gained emphasis and has been translated into a concrete programme of national reconstruction. We have therefore at this stage clearly to define the content of our economic Swaraj which must be in the direction of as much decentralisation as is possible under the present circumstances. Nor may we forget that decentralisation alone will help effectively to solve the problem of chronic unemployment of the vast majority of our agricultural population.

The Congress appointed in 1930 a Planning Committee under the Presidentship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. This Committee has been at work for several years. It has collected facts and figures. It is true that its labours are utilised. But these cannot be utilised unless the Congress makes up its mind as to what industries are to be centralised and what decentralised. Unless that is done each province will go its own way. I am afraid that already there is a kind of competition even among the Congress provinces in the field of big industry. Each province wants to introduce as many mills and factories as possible. We had thought

that the cloth industry was the one most eminently suitable for decentralisation. But even here each provincial Government is vying with the other to set up new cloth mills. Some people believe that in the present state of scarcity of cloth all means of increased production must be utilised. They however fail to see that this necessarily creates new capitalist vested interests. As a khadi worker I believe that with less capital and less effort and in a shorter time more can be accomplished by a systematic encouragement of the charkha and the hand-loom than by opening new mills. I have taken the example of the cloth industry. But it is time that we took counsel among ourselves and decided what industries might best be worked on centralised and what on decentralised basis.

When I talk of decentralised industry, I do not necessarily mean the application of mere hand power. Electric power may well be utilised for increasing the scope and efficiency of the worker in his own home and village. That this decentralised industry will eliminate periodical waste of national wealth consequent on industrial conflicts, strikes and lock-outs, is too obvious to be mentioned. To the extent these conflicts are avoided, there is good neighbourliness among the people. This decentralised industry may be organised on a co-operative basis. There should be production and distribution co-operatives. If production co-operatives are not immediately possible, distribution co-operatives can certainly be started by public bodies and the provincial Governments. The village worker does not find so much difficulty in producing goods as in marketing them.

XIV

AGRICULTURE AND OUR FOOD
PROBLEM

Our agriculture too must largely follow the pattern of decentralised industry. It must carefully consist of peasant proprietorships, with a provision that no plot shall be subdivided whether on account of inheritance, debt or any other cause, beyond what would maintain a village family. Decentralised industry and agriculture must supplement and complement each other. The latter too should be managed, as far as possible on co-operative basis, both for farming and marketing purposes.

The Congress pledged in the elimination of the middleman between the tenant and the State. Recently in response to a non-official resolution moved in the A. I. C. C. it was decided by the Working Committee that the provincial Governments be asked to send to the A. I. C. C. office their schemes for the abolition of the Zamindari System. The material received should be systematised and placed before the Working Committee for consideration. I hope the direction of the Working Committee in this matter will be speedily given effect to and a body of experts appointed to prepare a comprehensive plan for the elimination of the middleman in our agricultural economy. This body of experts may also suggest plans which would meet, with suitable modifications, the different requirements of the various provinces. In the U. P. an official Bill will soon be introduced in the legislature for the abolition of the Zamindari System. A committee has already been appointed to draft a Bill on the lines of the resolution which has been passed by the U. P. Legislature. It is hoped that the bill will have a smooth passage. The Zamindars should have no

objection as the bill provides for adequate compensation

The food problem which assumed dangerous proportions during the war continues to be our great concern even to-day. We are still dependent on what foreign countries choose to dole out to us. This dependence on the foreigner must be eliminated where the most primary needs of existence are concerned. With appropriate agricultural reform it should not be difficult to feed the present population of India and any immediate increase. Our agricultural production is extremely low. In Japan they raise per acre 3909 lbs. of rice while India gets only 939 lbs. of wheat. Japan get 2010 lbs. per acre as against 774 in our country. Here is a great deal of leeway to make by well directed agricultural research. There is enough waste land that can be brought under cultivation by well and canal irrigation and proper manures. There should also be a judicious readjustment between food and money crops and as far as possible, the profits to the cultivator from the two sources should be equalised. If that is not done it will not do merely to advise, induce or oblige the cultivator to abandon the better paid for the worse paid crops. The best plan to avoid famine and the threat of famine in the future is to divide the country in such agricultural regions or units, big or small, as would be sufficient so far as the essentials of human nutrition are concerned. Care must be taken that these regions produce what may constitute a scientifically balanced diet. The health of our agricultural population, the backbone of our nation, cannot be improved unless the peasant has two square meals a day consisting of food which is properly adjusted to form a scientifically balanced diet. Proper food is the first condition of rural health and hygiene.

In the matter of balanced diet more research is needed. But enough has been done thanks to Gandhiji's efforts, to make a useful beginning.

At the Centre we have to-day our esteemed leader Babu Rajendra Prasad a careful and conscientious Minister-in-charge of the Department of Food, and I have no doubt that he will not only enable us to tide over our present difficulties, but ensure such arrangements for the future as would never oblige us to go abegging for our food at foreign doors.

VV

THE INTERNATIONAL RIVALRIES

It democracy in the modern world is not possible with out a considerable economic levelling up and down it is no less inconsistent with international rivalries resulting in periodic global conflicts. In war there is always a concentration of power. War increases the power of political bosses and bureaucrats. Civil liberties are curtailed. The rights of free association and free expression of opinion whether on the platform or through the press and the radio, are greatly diminished. Modern wars tend to be global. Few countries can keep their neutrality. Even in neutral countries the fear of war diminishes civil liberties and increases State control. If therefore, democracy is to function properly and fully international strife and war must yield place to mutual goodwill and co-operation. However this is a problem which cannot be solved by the attitude of a single nation towards war. As long as there are empires whether fascist or democratic or socialist war must remain the only means of settling international rivalries. I have

said Socialist empires. It will be objected that socialism and imperialism are a contradiction in terms. But so also are democracy and imperialism. And yet we have imperialist democracies. Like democracy, socialism can in practice be consistent with political and economic imperialism. Bolshewic Russia has yet to convince the world that it has abandoned the Czarist policy of nibbling at its neighbours. The Socialist Government of England shows no convincing signs of relinquishing its hold upon its imperial possessions. What steps have been taken in India are halting and tardy and give rise to a suspicion that they are more due to the international situation than to any genuine desire to shed imperialism.

To sum up then, the historical evolution of our freedom movement, pledged as it is to non-violence and the good of the masses, demands a social order free from exploitation, functioning democratically and turned to international co-operation and peace. Such a society will be in consonance with the highest ideals of the age and time we live in. The Congress under Gandhiji's lead has been working for these objects. Now it must define the objects more clearly and work more consciously towards their realisation and utilise its newly acquired power towards that end.

XVI

NATIONAL UNITY

To-day we have some kind of a national government at the Centre and provinces have their popularly elected governments. In a short time we shall be assembling to form a new constitution for India's Freedom, if not achieved, it is surely

in sight. „The British can no longer deny it to us whatever their intentions. If to-day we miss our goal, the fault shall be ours. It will be due to the mistakes of commission and omission we make at this critical juncture. The greatest danger to a patient is not when the disease is active but when he is convalescing. The doctor's vigilance is relaxed and he has to take care of himself. We are in that critical condition, and the worst of it is that our enemies are clever and vigilant. The greatest strength of imperialism in India is that it has been possible for it to carry out its nefarious designs through the instrumentality of the Indians themselves. India was conquered by Indian money. Indian resources, Indian soldiers, and often with Indian brains. Our tragedy has been our divisions and differences and a tendency to subordinate larger national interests to those of caste, creed and party. We give to the smaller units the loyalty that is due to the whole. Herein lies our greatest weakness.

Of all the political virtues unity is the greatest and the most important, provided this unity is not super imposed by force but is natural and spontaneous. In this the British excel not only the Indians but also other European nations. At every critical moment of their history the British have ignored religious party and class differences. Even as early as the 16th century when sectarian differences led to religious wars and the Catholic hated the Protestant more heartily than either of them hated the non Christian, as soon as the English shores were threatened by the Spanish Armada sent by a Catholic Emperor English Catholics, even though persecuted, stood shoulder to shoulder with their Protestant countrymen to repel the foreign invasion. This has continued up to the present time. In the last war the Socialists had no hesitation to work under reactionary smoblish caste

ridden Churchill, when the national emergency made it necessary for them to do so. But in India small differences produce unbridgeable gulfs. Common points are forgotten petty disagreements over-emphasised. We must if we have to live and progress as a nation, check this inherent centrifugal tendency.

XVII

THE COMMUNAL CONFLAGRATION

At present the greatest danger to our freedom are the communal differences, specially between the two major communities, the Hindus and Muslims. The foreigner has taken the fullest advantage of these in the past. To-day he finds it his last trump card. He is playing it cleverly and subtly. It is unhistorical, unscientific, unethnical and unnatural to think that the Hindus and the Muslims are two nations. Their interests, social, political and economic, are identical. Their differences can be easily counted and are only skin deep. Their common points are innumerable. The foreigner cannot distinguish the Hindu from the Muslim except by the accident of dress, and that too only if he is familiar with sartorial differences which change from province to province. India, outside India, is considered one whole. No conqueror ever thought himself safe until he had brought the whole of it under his sway. No native ruler ever thought his kingdom complete and rounded off until he had established his hegemony over the whole of this ancient land. Only those periods of Indian History have been most productive when the whole of India was united under one Government, whether it was under the ancient Maurya and the Gupta dynasties or again under the Moghuls.

XVIII

DWARFING THE INDIAN GENIUS

Even though the present alien rule has dwarfed Indian genius by an unnatural system of foreign education and the denial of all opportunities of initiative yet by the mere fact of uniting India under one common mis-rule, it has released the creative energy of the nation in various fields of thought and action. There has been an Indian renaissance. To think of India then as divided into two nations Hindu and Muslim, is retrograde and reactionary. It is dividing what nature and history have united. I have my own grand nephews and nieces in Sind who are Muslims. They love me as well as do my Hindu grand-children. I cannot imagine that I as a Hindu am an Indian and they as Muslims belong to a different nationality. One of them a pretty little bride, wrote to me recently thus: 'We offer you our sincerest congratulations on your attaining the highest honour which any Indian can aspire to. May you long adorn the Congress Gadi with distinction and service. We are, of course, staunch Muslim Leaguers, but we pray that there should be a rapprochement between the Congress and the League.'

In this connection I would like to repeat to Indian Muslims the words of my predecessor in office. In his presidential address the Maulana Sahib said: Do we Indian Muslims, view the free India of the future with suspicion and mistrust or with courage and confidence? No present declaration for the future no constitutional safeguards can be a remedy for our doubts and fears. We are then forced to tolerate the presence of a third power. This third power is already entrenched here and has no intention of withdrawing and if we follow the path of fear and suspicion, we

must need look forward to its continuance. But if we are convinced that fear and doubt have no place, and that we must view the future with courage and confidence, then our course of action becomes quite clear. We find ourselves in a new world which is free from the dark shadows of doubt and vacillation, in action and apathy, and where the light of faith and determination, action and enthusiasm never fails". To this as a student of history I would only add that it was not want of faith and determination that made Islam great. To-day in India the Muslim League works in fear and suspicion and infects the whole Muslim community with it. When Muslims came into India from beyond the mountains, they came only in their thousands. They were not afraid of the teeming millions of Hindus. They came in the might of their faith and enthusiasm. To-day they form a fourth of the population. It is wrong to say that they are a minority. As the Maulana Sahab rightly put it, "In the texture of Indian politics nothing is further removed from the truth than that the Indian Muslim occupy the position of a political minority. Politically speaking the word minority does not mean a group that is numerically smaller and therefore entitled to special protection. It means a group that is so small in numbers and so lacking in other qualities that give strength, that it has no confidence in its own capacity to protect itself from the much larger group that surrounds it. Thus this is not a question merely of numbers, other factors also count In four out of eleven provinces, there is a Muslim majority. If British Baluchistan is added, there are five provinces with Muslim majorities. Even if we are compelled at present to consider the question on the basis of religious grouping, the position of the Muslim is not that of a minority only. If they are a minority in seven

provinces they are in a majority in five. This being so there is absolutely no reason why they should be oppressed by the feeling of being a minority'

XIX

THE WAY OF A BARBARIAN

I therefore, hold that a Hindu who believes a Muslim to be an alien not only does wrong to his religion but is an enemy of the freedom and progress of India. On the other hand, if a Muslim who is flesh and bone of our bone, believes and acts as if he were an alien on Indian soil, he does equal harm to his community and to the nation. We have almost everything in common except religion which should be a personal matter. To fight on questions of faith is the way of a barbarian. I know the present fight between Hindus and Muslims is not a religious fight. It is purely a communal conflict. It has nothing to do with political or economic issues that concern the masses of both the communities. The masses act as tools in the hands of the clever and often unscrupulous politicians. But whatever the cause, we must recognise the fact of the existing tension and bitterness and steer our course so as to avoid any major conflict.

XX

THE DEMANDS OF THE MINORITIES

I have already in my public statements made after my election said that the Congress must yield to the demands of the minorities, Muslim or any other but not at the expense of the nation. Such yielding in the past has largely been responsible for our present troubles. Also when facts are conflicting and confusing it is best to fall back upon basic moral principles. Some compromise on principles may be made only when there is no doubt about facts. The basic principles involved in the communal conflict are of nationalism and democracy. Nationalism historically

is higher in principle than communalism and democracy higher than sectional domination. In whatever, therefore, we do we must not allow the communal and undemocratic principles to triumph over nationalism and democracy. Viewed thus, I have no doubt that the Congress was wrong in accepting separate electorates which are anti-national and un-democratic. I believe much of our present trouble could have been avoided had we boldly refused to accept the undemocratic and anti-national principle of separate electorates. The communal conflict has to-day assumed not only a serious but a vicious aspect. It is quite possible that to avoid immediate trouble we may accept principles that cut at the root of nationality and democracy. If we do so, we shall not be trying the nation, but ultimately the Muslim and the other communities. I hope our elders will guard themselves and the country against being coerced or cajoled into making any anti-national and undemocratic compromises in the future

XXI

FROM BENGAL TO BIHAR

I was recently in East Bengal and Bihar. It would be criminal for me to mince matters. It would be a dereliction of public duty. Those who were responsible for the tragedy in East Bengal had given the masses an idea that Pakistan could be established by force—Lark Lenge Pakistan, Marke Lange Pakistan. If once the idea enters into the mass mind that the communal problem can be solved by force, it will be an evil day, not only for India but for all the communities concerned. Non-violence is a new creed. It may not be over-burdened. It can, in the present circumstances, succeed if there is some kind of restraint observed by the two parties in the conflict. And if one party uses extraordinary and

unconventional weapons, the other party too, in sheer self defence, will be obliged to use the same weapons. Those who preached mass conversion, forcible marriages, etc., were playing with fire. I know as a matter of fact that Muslim parties officiated at this diabolical use of violence and coercion. I would repeat here what I said in one of my statements on East Bengal after my return from there. 'Some people seem to think that loss of life is the greatest calamity that can befall a human being. But the greatest calamity for honourable people is to be obliged to forswear their faith at the point of the pistol. If all the people forcibly converted and all the women abducted and forcibly married had been done to death, in my opinion, that would have been a lesser tragedy than their yielding to force.' I am an absolute believer in non violence. But if the strain that was put on people in East Bengal had been put upon me, I do not know what my reflex action would have been. If sensitive and educated individuals are liable, under extreme provocation to yield the undesirable reflexes, much more so are groups. Whoever therefore preaches sanctions, encourages, or uses violence specially of the sort that was practised in East Bengal be he an individual or be it a group party or community does the greatest disservice to the nation. He works against humanity. If we must run at each other's throat let us do so cleanly and bravely, as befits men, and not in gruesome, cowardly ways which degrade us to the level of beasts.

If I must warn communities against the use of initial violence to settle their differences, I must warn them no less against the use of violence by way of retaliation and reprisal as was the case in Bihar. Two evils do not cancel each other. And these reprisals and

retaliations fall on innocent victims, even if the original attack was against those who really had done wrong and deserved punishment. But as a matter of fact in communal violence, whether provocative or retaliatory, only the poor and the helpless suffer. The authors of the trouble always manage to go scot free. In civil strife, as in war between nations, the unrestrained and diabolical use of violence will succeed only in producing the equivalent of the atom bomb which will annihilate both Hindus and Muslims.

XXII

THE CALLOUS CENTRE

The Central Government failing to interfere in Bengal, the provinces became virtually independent. The neighbouring province of Bihar under the circumstances was entitled to protest against what happened to the Biharis in Calcutta. The Bihar Government would also have been entitled to warn the Bengal Government against the probable repercussions of what was being perpetrated against the Hindus in East Bengal with what looked almost like the connivance of the Government. The Bihar Government should have made it plain to Bengal that the Hindus in Bihar were profoundly agitated over the fate of their co-religionists in Bengal and that with the best will in the world the Government might not be able to control the situation if the feelings of the people were strained beyond a certain pitch. The Hindus of Bihar should have agitated and insisted upon their Government to take up that position. That would have been the proper and the constitutional way. If the Centre fails to make itself responsible for internal security in the provinces, I am clearly of the opinion that popular governments in the provinces must take up such matters with each other in future, if they are likely to arrive at a better arrangement.

than if the communities take the law into their own hands and indulge in reprisals.

XXIII

THE HYSTERIC VIOLENCE

Violence is ugly and futile in any case, but the unorganised hysteric violence of the mob is worse than futile. It is fatal to the very cause on whose behalf it is invoked. I am afraid that if the present orgies of provocation and retaliation continue, the Muslim League leadership will soon be unable to control its followers, even if it should decide to. And so might the Congress, though the Congress leadership has done its best to save the people from the hysteria of violence. If that happens then Indians will be divided into two armed camps of communal fanatics and the Britisher will stand guard over them both with his bayonet. The day of India's freedom will be indefinitely postponed.

If we are to be worthy of freedom, we must learn to live together and respect each other's sentiments. Hindus and Muslim minorities are scattered all over this country. No amount of police or military protection can permanently and effectively protect them from the wrath of the majority communities if the latter lose all sense of moral obligation towards them. If no Hindu's life, property and honour are safe in a Muslim majority area and no Muslim's in a Hindu majority area, then civilised life becomes an impossibility. Even Mr. Jinnah's dream of Pakistan though it has made the problem what it is, holds out no prospect of its solution, for it leaves the minorities where they are. Did his scheme envisage a total and wholesale transfer of populations and the concentration of all the Muslims in India in one compact territory so that no Hindu, Sikh, Christian or Parsi is left in the Muslim State and no Muslim left anywhere else in

India, the scheme might at least have the merit of being at least a logical solution of the problem, however costly, tragic and inhuman it might be to carry it out. Even if the Muslims have a theocratic state of their own, they cannot be allowed to impose it on Hindu, Sikh and other minorities in their territory. These minorities have at least as much right of self-determination as the Muslims for themselves in India as a whole. Nor can the rest of India be reasonably expected to harbour large sections of population in its midst who openly repudiate their citizenship in that state. If the Muslim League claims Pakistan on religious and communal grounds, let it face all its implications and not try to eat the cake and yet have it. This is a terrible solution as detrimental in the long run to the Muslim interests as to the Hindu, but it is a logical consequence of the communalism with which the League is infecting its followers and which is making a common civilised life difficult. But in no case must we allow the poison of communal strife further to disintegrate our national and corporate life. In no case must we allow ourselves to be bullied and black-mailed by a section of the population into sacrificing the just rights of the others.

XXIV

TO THE LEADERS OF FANATICISM

I hope, however, that leaders of the fanatics among both the communities will have more sense and humanity than to take recourse to desperate and mediaeval remedies. The problem is easy of solution if only we accept the obvious fact that if there are two nations in India, they are the exploited

and the exploiting of both or all the communities. The Hindus and Muslims have common enemies, and that is poverty, disease, and ignorance. If only we realise what we really are, there need be no quarrel between us.

I have laboured this point at length, because this is the greatest stumbling block in our path to freedom and progress. Even at this late hour I hope, now that the Muslim League is in the Central Government and shares responsibility with the Congress, the orgies that were enacted in Calcutta, East Bengal, Bihar and to a lesser degree elsewhere, will be nightmares of the past. We shall write anew on a clean slate of brotherly love and co-operation as children of a common motherland.

XXV INDIAN STATES

If the Hindu Muslim question gives us a headache, the Indian States problem is no less distressing. Like the communal, the State question is easy of solution, if we think in terms of India and not in terms of any section or community. The princes must realise that India cannot be half free and half slave and that in a free India they cannot exist and carry on as they do now. Their power to-day is buttressed by the foreigner who misuses them for his imperial purposes. Where his purpose is not served, he treats them with scant courtesy. The Indian princes have to adjust their conscience to the dictates of the political department. Those who might be trustees of their people's welfare have become puppets of a foreign power. Under such circumstances, their

high sounding titles, their paraphernalia of ancient pomp and pageantry appear ugly, empty and ridiculous. Their lavish personal and family expenditure on their fanciful and very often harmful wants impoverishes the already starving masses who are denied even the rudimentary rights of citizenship.

XXVI

A DOUBLE-DISTILLED SLAVERY

The States people have to tolerate a double-distilled slavery. The masters who harass them are themselves slaves. But these masters seem to like their chains because it enables them to live in ignoble ease and luxury. If they only knew their real self-interest, they would, instead of relying upon the precarious help of a swiftly fading imperialism, put their trust in the affections of a free, happy and prosperous people. The States people have yet some affection for the person of their rulers. Political India has no objection to their existence if only they would live and act as democratic, constitutional monarchs. In this they might learn a lesson from their nominal over-lord, the King of England. He is loved and respected because he has ceased to rule. Because he functions in accordance with the will of his people, he, as king, can do no wrong. His royalty merely symbolises the unity and greatness of his people who are free to manage their own affairs democratically. He is thus assigned a noble rôle in the economy of his nation. The last king now the Duke of Windsor, would not cross the will of the chosen representatives of his people even in such a personal matter as his marriage. Let the Indian princes act in the same

but rather hangs in the balance, any false step might be disastrous. Power politics at this stage of our national life is sure to spell our ruin. Moreover as I have said before there is much uphill constructive work yet to be done, which can most effectively be done, if we believe ourselves to be and act as humble servants of the toiling and striving millions of India. Let every position of trust and power and responsibility be for the sake of service and not a matter of Self patronage, pride or self aggrandisement. And when we are in high positions, let us not think in terms of creed, caste or family, but in terms of work and ability. As public servants we have neither friends nor opponents. Provided there is merit and loyal service to the country and devotion to duty old prejudices and enmities should not count. Above all, in every public position we must be most scrupulously honest and above board.

XXIX

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

We shall soon be meeting in the Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution of free India. It will be a democratic constitution and will be federal in character. We may not, however, forget that, in the administrative as in the economic field, centralisation more than is absolutely necessary is inimical to liberty. It is good, therefore, that the provinces in free India shall have the maximum autonomy consistent with external and internal security. But some of our provinces are each as big as a country in Europe. There may be over-centralisation in the administration of the provinces, which too we must avoid. Long ago how long history does not record, the Indian genius worked out the village and local panchayat. It remained our fort through many a turbulent period. Kings

↗ Acharya Kripalani with Mrs. Sucheta Kripalani (seated) at the
A. I. C. C. Session at Delhi

The Tremendous Trio Acharya Kripalani buried in important document in
the back ground of Pandit Nehru and Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali discussed in vital discussion





Voice of India-
Acharya Kripalani ad-
dressing India, Britain
and the world from the
presidential chair at the
Meerut Session of the
Congress last year



Gandhiji with President Kripalani.

and dynasties fought and failed, empires rose, rules, misrules had disappeared, but the villager's life maintained its even tenor, away from the din of battle and the rush of rising and falling empires. He had a village-state which protected his life and property and made civilised life possible. Progressively, we must delegate to the village panchayats judicial powers in petty criminal and civil cases; the local police too might be put under the charge of the panchayat. If we build upon this village unit of self-government, rehabilitate it to the altered conditions of to-day, we shall be working in consonance with the genius of our people. This is the natural and the easy way. Merely to copy the West should not be our object. We may also not forget that the West has made, more specially in the big countries, democracy complex and expensive. The West has evolved the official red-tape which make the democratic machinery cumbrous and slow-moving. All these drawbacks we must try to avoid in the new constitution that we may devise.

Our judicial system must be simple and effective. The law's delay, expense and complicity must be avoided. Also there must be ample provision made for the enjoyment of civil liberties. They must be protected even from the arbitrary action of a democratic and representative government. We may not forget that power corrupts even the patriot in office. Ample provision, consistent with the larger interests of the country and the masses, must be made for the protection of minorities. Their language and culture must have free scope for development. There must be absolute tolerance in matters of faith and religion. Every individual and every group must be free to propagate his

and its ideas, consistently with the maintenance of peace and public morality

XXX

INDIA AND THE WORLD

The Congress has for many years taken keen interest in international happenings. These affect us and to-day no country can for long remain indifferent to what is happening elsewhere in the world. With our national struggle based on non-violence, we have naturally always stood for the international disarmament, peace, co-operation and open diplomacy. Through our sufferings we know what aggression means to a subject people. The hard cruel strokes of foreign domination have taught us to value international peace and goodwill. These lessons learnt in adversity we hope we shall not forget in happier and more prosperous times when we have achieved full freedom.

We believe in a new world order based upon goodwill and co-operation. We believe that these objects can be achieved by international organisation consisting of free and equal nations. We believe that so long as imperialism exists, whatever international organisation is devised for peace will inevitably be turned into an instrument of ambition by powerful and unscrupulous nations. It will not be based upon equality, justice and fair play, but upon the combined might of a few dominant nations. There will always be the Big Three Four or Five. That way lies danger. International thieves and robbers, even as ordinary thieves and robbers sooner or later and sooner than later fall out among themselves, and when they do they shake the very foundations of the earth as they have done twice within the last thirty years. As long as there are dependent

nations and peoples, so long will there be conflict and war

XXXI

WHITHER HUMANITY ?

Further we believe that the smooth and successful working of an international organisation, even as of democracy, is not merely a question of external and institutional arrangements. Law and constitution, international courts and armies are good as far as they go, but just as human passions have to be subdued by an inner self-discipline and then helped by external devices, so must the passions and ambitions of nations be first regulated by a reform of the heart, before any external device can succeed. Humanity must learn to honour only such leaders and politicians who would lead people to peaceful and fruitful rivalry rather than those who would rouse their passions and ambitions by placing before them rosy pictures of power, wealth, empire and domination. When this is done and nations have cultivated the will to be honest, just and fair in their dealings with each other, external devices of constitution and law will not be difficult to devise and work. India stands for a society of nations, where every country, big or small, important or unimportant, free or under international guardianship, has, as in a democracy, one vote each. As in internal politics we are against the dictatorship of the one of the few, so are we against the international dictatorship of one powerful nation or a number of them in combination. It is difficult

to maintain democratic institutions in a world of nations with unequal international status.

XXXII

THE NERVES ON EDGE

Even while the war was going on, the fundamental freedoms for which it was advertised to be fought, were repudiated in practice by the Allies. The stress of war was invoked as an argument to justify every violation of moral principles. But even after the war is over, the fundamental freedoms are as still born as ever. The peace Conference is anything but peaceful and the U N O anything but united. The nerves of all nations are on edge and already their minds are haunted by the fear of a third world war. What the big nations of the world are thinking is not how to remove the cause of war but how to make bigger and better atom bombs. It should have been clear from the start that atomic energy could not be used for peaceful purposes without its being available for purposes of destruction. To-day the experts have given their considered opinion on the same lines. If the use of this energy is not somehow banned then with national rivalries ambitions, ideas of revenge and retaliation being what they are, there is danger not only to world peace, but to the very existence of the human race on this planet.

XXXIII

A TRIAL OF BAD KARMA

The treatment meted out to the defeated nations leaves a trial of bad karma of fear resentment and revenge. In the case of an anti social individual punishment revenge and retribution are not the best or the most civilised methods of cure. What is true of the individual is true

of the nation. If it is unjust and inhuman in the case of an individual to visit the sins of the father on the son, much more so is it in the case of groups to visit the sins of one generation on another. The defeated nations should not be parcelled up, or made to serve as pawns in the game of international power-politics. Every effort should be made to put them on their legs, and every opportunity afforded them to live a normal, healthy, political and economic life

A free India will have in the field of international affiliations, connections more natural and more suited to her geographical position than she has had under foreign domination. As a matter of fact up to now we have had no free connection at all. We were bound to the wheel of British international affiliations. Whoever was a friend of imperial Britain was India's friend whoever was Britain's enemy became automatically India's enemy. For the sake of British alliances and enmities, India was twice dragged into war at the cost of untold suffering and loss of life. Free India must cast off this heavy burden. We must have a foreign policy of our own.

We have no past commitments and no imperialist ambitions for the future. We are concerned with achieving and maintaining the freedom of our country so that our nationals at home and abroad may have their rightful opportunity to full and free development, according to their resources and their genius. We have no enemies. We would like to forget even the wrongs that Great Britain has done to us, once she has made amends and withdrawn her yoke from our necks. We would have no quarrel with South Africa if in the insolence of racial

pride its white minority did not seek to deprive the Indian domiciled there of their elementary rights of citizenship after having enticed them from home

XXXIV

EXPERIMENTS IN CIVILIZATION

We respect the right of every people to choose the form of government that suits them best without depriving others of the same right. We watch with equal interest the Russian adventure in Communism, the British experiment in democratic socialism, and the American faith in private enterprise. We wish to imitate none of these forms, though we may have a great deal to learn from each. We would like to maintain a friendly intercourse with all these great peoples on a basis of equality and mutual respect for each other's rights. We must be on our guard against being misled by the propaganda that is being carried on in a section of the world press against Russia, and in another section against the democracies. We must not be duped by ideological claptrap into taking sides in international rivalries and thus embroil ourselves in a third world war in the mistaken belief that we are serving the world. We should have enough scope at home for our reforming zeal without attempting to reform other nations.

XXXV

TO CHINA VIA LONDON

Though we must develop and maintain equally friendly relations with all nations, our associations with our

neighbours in Asia and Australia will naturally be closer. With China and Japan we have long, historic and cultural associations. Even to-day, thanks to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who in the fitness of things is our foreign minister, we have cordial relations with China. But we are so much separated from our next-door neighbour that no cable can come from China here. It has to come *via* London and takes often more than 24 hours. All this must be changed. As soon as a democratic Japan, free from its imperial nightmare, comes into existence, India must cultivate its friendship. We may not be obsessed with other peoples' prejudices, be they of the East or the West. We have also cultural bonds with Indonesia and the eastern islands which we must develop. Our trade can most profitably flow in these lands to mutual advantage. India and Australia have nothing to lose and much to gain by closer intercourse. Central Asia and the Middle East are other lands with which we have cultural contacts. A fourth of our population professes in common with the inhabitants of these lands the faith of the Prophet. We must renew these contacts and forge new links of friendship. With Soviet Russia too our relations must be closer. With all that we must keep up the connections we already have with the western democracies.

, XXXVI

THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICES

In the past our organisation, whenever occasion arose, freely expressed its views upon current international affairs.

Now that our representatives are in the seat of power we will have to observe greater restraint. We must realise that free governments have innumerable channels through which they get information concerning the trends of thoughts and action in other lands. They have their regular diplomatic services and their intelligence agents in other lands. They have scholars studying in foreign universities. They have their merchants and industrial and trade agents. They spend millions of pounds to maintain these sources of information. Apart from international press agencies, they have thus many channels through which information about other countries flows to them. Even then, often the information they collect from all these open and secret, official and non-official agencies proves to be misleading if not wrong. We must realise that to-day most of these sources of information are closed to us. We have yet to establish this net work of international agencies. At present most of the information on international affairs that we get is from one or two tainted press agencies. All this makes it desirable that we must be guarded in our opinions about other countries. We have to realise that to-day more than ever any irresponsible expression of opinion on our part may involve responsibilities we are not yet ready to shoulder. We must, therefore, observe in this matter reserve and restraint. Our aim remains the same which is to contribute our best as a free nation towards democracy the emancipation of the oppressed international peace and co-operation. We shall fulfil these aims better by trying to realise them in

our own institutions and ways of life than by sitting in judgment on other peoples

XXXVII

FETISH OF SOVEREIGNTY

There is an aspect of our international relation about which it is necessary, in the interest of peace, that we should make our stand clear. And that is that though we make no fetish of national sovereignty and are willing to subordinate its rights to the claims of world peace and co-operation on the basis of perfect equality between all peoples, we will not tolerate interference with the right of our people to choose their form of government or violation of the territorial integrity of India. Whether it is the presence of British troops in India against the wishes of our chosen representatives, or foreign-paid propaganda to create dissensions in our ranks, or the continued occupation of portions of our soil by the Portuguese and the French on whatever pretensions, it is a violation of those fundamental freedoms of which no nation can be deprived. If the British can quit India, as they have unequivocally promised to do, it is ridiculous for the Portuguese authorities to claim that Goa is a part of their country thousands of miles away. I congratulate Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia for having exposed the gross injustice and indignity to which our compatriots are subjected in Goa. I assure our people there that they have our full sympathy in their fight to vindicate their just rights and that free India

will never tolerate their subjection to alien tyranny I appeal to the Portuguese authorities not to complicate an already complicated international situation by claiming what is not legitimately theirs and to build an enduring foundation of friendship between our two nations by undoing the wrong that has been done. The days of empires are over and to-day when even big and powerful nations are being obliged to give up their empires it is time that the small nations, in their own interest, should gracefully withdraw from theirs and thus help to remove the main cause of wars between nations.

XXXVIII

SOUTH AFRICA

The question of the status of our countrymen in South Africa has suddenly become one of world eminence, having been ably represented by the Indian delegation before the U N O. Field Marshal Smuts vainly put forth his objection that the question being purely domestic was not one to be entertained by the U N O. The argument, I am glad was brushed aside by the assemblage. It is apposite to recall that this prolonged fight has been possible only or mainly because our countrymen made for the first time in history the successful use of the marvellous weapon of Satyagraha in that land of gold and diamonds. The end of this question we have not seen and may not for some time to come. Sufficient it is for our purpose to note that our countrymen there are holding forth the non-violent battle in which men and women belonging to all parts and communities of India

have joined hands. The battle is not one of bread and butter but of national self-respect and honour which is more than bread and butter. On your behalf I wish to tell our countrymen there that in their noble struggle the whole of India is at their back. In passing I note here that the attention of the coloured and exploited races of the earth is rivetted on this struggle alike for the issue as for the means employed to bring it about.

Closely akin to the South African struggle is the one now being carried on in Kenya and Tanganyika. Here the position of the white man is much more untenable than in South Africa. But for want of space in this bird's-eye view of a variety of questions, which must engage us on the threshold of independence, I would love to take you through the romance of our pre-European relations and peaceful penetration in Africa through its East coast. I must content myself with commending to your attention the papers made available to us by the East Africa Indian Deputation that recently visited India. In your name I pledge India's support to our countrymen in East Africa as in the South and wish them every success which is theirs by right.

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 XXXIst the
 its. To
 CEYLON AND ^{show} MA

Both Ceylon and Burma are ^{our} next-door neighbours. Only a strip of water separates Ceylon from India. Like

Burma it took Buddhism from India. Geographically, culturally and traditionally it is united with India which it can aptly claim as its mother country. The northern part of Ceylon—Jaffna—is hardly distinguishable from the mainland. For sometime past there has been an unfortunate movement to oust the Indian labour population from Ceylon on the ground that they cannot claim citizenship rights there and at the same time regard themselves as Indian nationals. A. In South Africa, Indian labour was, in the first instance induced to go to Ceylon to serve the latter's economy. Ceylon and India have been good neighbours all along and the Congress is determined to maintain and develop these relations. In March 1946 the Congress Working Committee deputed Shri Aryanayakam and G. Ramachandran to meet the Ceylon ministers and discuss with them the vexed question of Indian labour. They succeeded in clearing some ground. It was proposed to send Pandit Nehru and Shri C. Raja gopalachari to carry on the negotiations further. But owing to pressing engagements they could not proceed there. It is unthinkable that a peaceful solution of the question cannot be found. Ceylon and India have a common destiny. Cut off from India, Ceylon stands in the danger of being swallowed up in the global strategy of big imperialist powers.

Ethnically and historically Burma is not a part of India. But a common sub^{is th} and a common struggle for freedom from foreign imp^{and} have forged a spiritual link between the two. The expⁱⁿerience of the last war has shown how vital the two are to each other for their existence as free

countries Indian nationals have played an important part in the development of the Burmese economy. They have amassed fortunes there. It is up to them to re-assure the Burmese that they have no designs to benefit themselves at their expense and that their activities are not inimical to the Burmese interests. Exploited ourselves, we must not lay ourselves open to the charge of exploiting others. Indian nationals in Burma must identify themselves with the people of Burma and mix with them as sugar does with milk. Knit together in a common friendly relationship, India, Burma and Ceylon will be in a position to fulfil their historical mission in the creation of a federation of free Asiatic nations that would constitute a powerful bulwark against imperialism and exploitation, whether of the Western or the Eastern type.

XL

OUR ORGANISATION

Let us clearly understand what the Congress is. We hear to-day, about Congress Governments. This is a misleading term. The so-called Congress Governments are popular democratic governments. What Congress has done is to organise the country for the formation and smooth functioning of these governments. To-day the Congress has organised the people of India for shouldering state responsibility. For many years our people were organised and led by the Congress in their struggle against the arbitrary rule of the British Government in India. It may be that

again the Congress, instead of organising the democratic state, may go into the wilderness and resume the struggle for freedom. Let us hope it will not be necessary to do so. But the point that I would like to impress upon you is, that the Congress is merely the agency for organisation of the people of India for effective national service. The service may take various forms according to changing circumstances.

XII

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

The Congress thus is a democratic organisation seeking to represent and act on behalf of the people of India. It has done this through service, sacrifice and suffering. It could not be otherwise, for it had to dislodge from its position of power a foreign imperialism that had crushed and emasculated the country. We must clearly understand that the Congress is not the Government. It is a volunteer organisation. This is its strength as well as its weakness. A volunteer organisation is not buttressed by the physical might of the state. It does not rely for its discipline or for the carrying out of its orders upon the magistrate, the constable and the soldier. It functions only through the willing loyalty of its members. Its authority is moral and physical and not coercive. The utmost that the Congress can do is to expel a member from its organisation.

The first condition therefore, of the existence and effective functioning of such an organisation is unity. This unity is not superimposed by a director or a bureaucrat

It can be only achieved if its members learn consciously and deliberately to subordinate personal and party considerations to the larger interests of the whole. They must realize that the larger embraces the smaller. This realization is more necessary in India whose bane through the centuries has been the parochial loyalties of caste, creed, class and the narrow geographical unit. This does not mean that there should be no difference of opinion or no groups or parties in the Congress. It only means that the different groups and parties should realize that in an organic unit one cannot be true to a part unless one is true to the whole. We may in this respect take a lesson from England. An Englishman's loyalty to his country transcends all family, local and party loyalties.

XIIL

THE LIQUOR SHIP OF POLITICS

This can be done if we try to emphasise what unites us rather than divides us from one another. It should not be difficult because in reality the points of agreement between groups in the Congress are more numerous and more important than the points of difference. Let us not elevate small disagreements to the seemingly heroic heights of principles. We must also cultivate personal contacts, for men and women are often better than their ideas and ideologies, and this can only be discovered by social contacts. Above all let no group act as a liquor shop in a respectable neighbourhood, drawing to itself the wayward, the disappointed and the disgruntled of the family.

The second condition of healthy and effective functioning of the Congress is discipline. This must be self imposed. We must build such traditions and conventions as would make indiscipline difficult, if not impossible. Anybody indulging in conduct that is likely to harm the organisation or the country must lose caste in the Congress. There must be things that simply cannot be done by Congressmen because they are not done. Nor must there be a scramble for power or a desire to capture the organisation. Power must flow from service and must be used for greater service. The Congress organisation is not a government. We can get out of it only as much as we put in it by the service of our people. In their affection we must realise as Gandhiji does, our highest reward and fulfilment.

IVL

THE BRITISH CHURCHILL & THE INDIAN CONSTABLE

In our struggle against foreign imperialism we have learnt and employed certain methods of agitation and struggle for the attainment of our goal of independence. Because these methods have paid us in the past we are likely to believe that they are of universal application. We imagine that they will serve us also against the democratically established governments which we have now ourselves installed in power. We have put them there to advance the cause of freedom. The methods employed in our agitation against the foreign government may not, therefore, be quite appropriate in the case of our own. The foreign government

provided us with no means of influencing, much less regulating, its policies. If we made any constructive suggestions, they were not heeded. There was no democratic device by which we could displace the executive. The British, in spite of their admiration for Churchill and appreciation of his war services, could throw him out, because for problems of peace they wanted a more suitable leadership. But here in India we had not the power to change a village constable, if he chose to make a public nuisance of himself. The only remedy under such circumstances was agitation and criticism, which were largely necessarily negative. No constructive suggestions were tolerated or accepted. We had also resorted to direct action for the achievement of our independence. To-day, when we can change our legislators and ministers, direct action should be out of the question. Even in our criticism we must be careful and considerate. Our ministers in the provinces and at the Centre are harassed by so many political and administrative problems that they need our understanding and sympathy. The nation wants too many things done quickly. We have desired freedom so keenly and so long that we have come to believe that its advent will solve all our problems. We are, therefore, apt to be impatient and to overlook the difficulties our representatives have to face in a government that has no traditions of service, and whose officials have always acted as the masters of the people. The machinations of the vested interests, official and unofficial, native and foreign, also make the task of a National Government at this initial

stage difficult. Our criticism must, therefore, be constructive and sympathetic and never merely destructive. We must give our representatives breathing time to clear the mess that they have inherited.

IVL

THE EXCLUSIVE PATRIOTISM

Against the foreigner we could justifiably claim exclusive patriotism. Such a claim would sound hollow against our tried and trusted leaders who have proved their credentials with at least as much suffering and sacrifice as we ourselves have put in the cause of the country. I know that power corrupts even the patriot and the servant of the people. But the risk of power corrupting can never be avoided. In the complex society of to-day the executive must have requisite power to discharge its onerous duties. It will not do to repeat parrot like the 19th century liberal slogan that, that Government is the best which governs the least. To-day society must be defended against the action of individuals and associations whose subtle legal ways seek to exploit it. The State must protect the rights of the citizen against such individuals and associations. It is, therefore, obliged to take upon itself tasks which no ancient ruler even conceived it possible. If therefore, the National Executive have to discharge their duties well and efficiently they must have the requisite power. To-day even in democracies the executives have such wide powers as Charles the First never dared to claim for himself. The only remedy against state power then is eternal vigilance. This is possible by the widest diffusion of knowledge, general and political. In the meantime let us make our suggestions to the Executive through channels we have already created.

Let nothing be done or said which will be used by our enemies to discredit our representatives in the Government.

VL

KICKING THE LADDER

So much for the would-be critics. But those who are in the Government must also never forget that they are the servants of the people, not their masters. They must remember that they cannot afford to kick the ladder that has taken them to their present eminence. Let them, therefore, always remain loyal to the Congress and through it to the people of India. From them they derive their strength and to them is their first and foremost responsibility. They must also see that they are not swallowed up by the bureaucratic machine. They must reform and simplify it. They must have less of red-tapism and consistently with their public duty they must be accessible to the people. They must also dispense with much of the paraphernalia of pomp and power that a foreign government though necessary to keep its prestige. Their prestige is derived from service and voluntary poverty which they embraced before office came their way.

It is often complained that the constitution of the Congress has broken down. It no longer works smoothly, the organisation has become too big and complex for it. There is, therefore, a demand for overhauling it. To meet this demand, the A. I. C. C. has appointed a committee to suggest necessary changes. The committee has met often and made its suggestions. These, if they are approved by the Working Committee and the Subjects Committee, will be placed before you for your adoption. If for any reason it is not possible to adopt the changes immediately, the Constitution Committee has suggested some interim changes which will regulate our elections and eliminate from these,

as far as possible corruption, scramble for posts and violence. But we must not forget that external checks cannot be effective, unless we cultivate public virtues. The last war has killed all idealism and made the average citizen cynical. It has introduced black market methods everywhere. These methods are used in Congress elections too. Bribery, fraud, impersonation and sometimes even violence are used to coerce the voter. Ballot boxes are stolen and destroyed. All this is degrading. It is a reflection not only on our public spirit but on our moral principles. It is strange that we should be non-violent in fighting foreign imperialism, but violent in our dealings with each other. This clearly shows that our non violence is that of the weak and not of the strong. It is better to be strong and violent than to be weak and non violent.

VII

THE INSTRUMENTS OF A NOBLE CAUSE

It is our great good fortune that we of this generation have been afforded an opportunity to be the instruments of a noble cause. It is not merely the freedom of our people from foreign yoke that we are called upon to strive and work for. Such an opportunity has come to many people in history. Ours is a unique opportunity. It is to win our freedom by non violent and truthful means and to work for high ends by moral means. Ours is the opportunity to bring about a fusion of different castes and creeds and racial and religious types. Ours is the opportunity to unify what appear to be differing and conflicting cultures. We have to work to build up unity in diversity and produce a mosaic of many colours. We have to combine various and often different sound and note to produce a symphony that was

never before heard on land or sea. We may not forget that to-day humanity must find a peaceful solution to its conflicts, social, economic, political, racial and cultural or perish. There can be no violent solution. Violence has over-reached itself. It threatens to destroy the patient with the disease. Some other methods must be found. India has found the method and tried it to some purpose, under a leadership that comes once in many centuries. It is a new method. There have been lapses. But remember, no revolution in history was less costly in the loss of life, property and the dislocation of normal life, and created less hatred and strife than the Indian revolution, which, if we are not negligent, is on the verge of success. But whether immediate success crowns our efforts or not let us not forget that we are engaged in a good and great cause. In such a cause there can be no ultimate failure. But if the cause is to succeed, the agents working for it must themselves be good and great. Slavery works neither for goodness nor for greatness. But the darkness of centuries can be removed the moment the light is brought in. In India the light has been lit. Let us keep it steadily burning and let us follow its lead, and all shall yet be well with us—Bande Mataram.

VINDAY MATRAM !

CHAPTER VI

THE SPLENDID MRS KRIPALANI !

Acharya Kripalani would have been an incomplete figure, a cart with one wheel, if he had not received unstinted and untiring sympathy and support from his devoted wife who is his better half in thought, word and deed. Aruna Asaf Ali has her own fancy boats in the ocean of Indian politics and would not put her shoulder to the wheel of her husband but such is not the case with the Kripalanis. They swim together and that is why they have never sunk in the ocean of political ideologies. Their private ambitions and social ideals are identical. The only parallel to Mrs. Kripalani is Mrs. JaiParkash Narain who has dissolved her personality in the Socialism of Mr Narain as the former has done in the Gandhism of Acharya Kripalani.

I

BEFRIENDING THE BENGAL

They befriended the forlorn Bengal

As soon as Kripalani was elected President of the Congress, he did not allow the grass to grow under his feet but rushed to the most affected and dangerous areas in East Bengal to see with his own eyes and to hear with his own ears the terrible happenings at Noakhali and other places. At considerable peril to his safety and to his convenience, he went there. He did not go to Bengal when she was in a festive mood ready to garland him with tons of garlands, to arrange for his mile-long processions and streaming banners and mammoth meetings when the gay city of Calcutta and

the smiling towns of Bengal would strew on his head flowers from the windows and balconies

He went to Bengal when Bengal was in utter shame and humiliation and when she was weeping the tears of anguish—tears that were hot and streaming down her cheeks at the loot, arson, butcheries, bestialities, abduction of women, mass rapings, forceful conversions and marriages. Bengal, therefore, when was forlorn, was befriended by Acharya. "A friend in need, is a friend indeed" The name of this man, therefore must be written in letters of gold

II

THIS SPLENDID WOMAN

In his perilous journey who accompanied him ? It was his wife who beneath a jovial appearance conceals in her, no doubt, a very tender and loving heart, yet a heart of steel. Danger cannot shake her. Perils she must overcome and there in the remotest part of Bengal affected by revenges not of nature but by men who had turned into beasts, this Florence Nightingale, this Grace Darling, this Charlya Bai went to look after the afflicted to wipe their tears, to soothe them, to feed them and to instill courage into their drooping hearts

No pen picture of Acharya is complete without giving a short life sketch. This splendid woman who, when the Hindu womanhood was trampled under foot by the hooligans at Noakhali went to the interior of villages on foot with knec-deep water at places and rescued women who had been forcibly abducted, raped, converted, married and lying entombed in Burkha

III

MASTER OF ARTS

She is an M. A. in history of the Delhi University and comes of a highly respected Brahmo family of Bengal in the district of Nadia. She passed her M. A. examination after which she became a professor in the University of Benares where she served till 1938, when she resigned. Her father the late Dr. Surendra Nath Mazumdar was in the Provincial Grade of the Punjab Medical Service where he rose to the position of the Civil Surgeon and her grandfather was one of the twelve ordained missionaries of Keshab Chandra Sen the founder of New Dispensation in Bengal.

IV

THE MARRIAGE MUDDLE

It is reported on a most reliable authority that she rejected many dazzling offers of marriage including marriage with an I. C. S. officer and preferred Acharya to all her suitors. Many were the objections advanced against her marriage by her nearest relations on some grounds principally because Acharya was a man of slender means and marriage with him would mean a comfortless home further they belonged to different provinces and therefore there was likelihood of marriage proving not happy. But she just as Sabitri once having decided to marry Satyaban even knowing full well that Satyaban would live for one year more could not be dissuaded from her course of action could not be prevailed upon to give up the idea of marrying Acharya.

It is humorously remarked that the first person to discover Acharya's great merits was Mahatma Gandhi, and the second individual was Sucheta Debi the latter

notwithstanding the objections raised against her marriage, brushed them all aside, and chose Acharva as her husband. The marriage has proved very happy indeed. Like Bismarck when overworked and fatigued, Acharya would come after strenuous work to his wife to derive consolation and to laugh away the worries and strain of the day

V

THE SONGSTER WITH A BROOM

She can sing very well devotional songs. When Mahatma Gandhi in 1939 came to Allahabad, she sang at the prayer meetings, Tagore's devotional song with her melodious voice much to the delight of the audience. The first woman of the land washes her own clothes as also her husband's, prepares the kitchen, cooks food and takes a broomstick to sweep clean the rooms. She looks after Acharya with the love and tenderness of a very affectionate wife and would be always solicitous of his health. She does the most ordinary Khadi Saree and puts on no ornament. There is a close affinity between the husband and the wife—both are wedded to plain-living and high-thinking and intense national work

VI

THE TASK BEFORE KRIPALANI

Indian Nationalism has made so many injurious compromises with communalism and given such an ample chance to British Imperialism to get well-entrenched that it should stand aghast at the magnitude of its folly. Now the only compromise it can make with its ever-clamorous

rival to satisfy it is to concede Pakistan to it. But even that will not mean the end of its trouble. There will be two Pakistans with all the present communal strains and stresses inside and outside them and soon enough there will be an attempt to link them up with a corridor which may be followed by a Pakistanist crusade with the conquest of the whole of India as its ultimate objective. For the Indian Nationalist Freedom Movement there is no choice but to fight Pakistanism relentlessly and to beat it down and wipe it out. Ambedkerism is a far feebler foe. But it is enthusiastically allying itself with Jinnahism—the presence of Mr Mandal as a League nominee in the Interim Government is the most convincing proof of this fact—and a systematic and sustained effort may be made by British Imperialism to put more vigour into it. Frontier Maliks may also be egged on to put a spoke in the wheel of Indian democracy as the recent events in the tribal area have violently demonstrated. But next to Jinnahism comes the Princely Order in the list of the Indian Democratic Freedom Movement's enemies. While referring to the Indian States, Acharya Kripalani has emphasised the necessity of their people being enabled to come into their own. But unfortunately during its negotiation with the Cabinet Mission the Congress neglected their cause. It did not try to extract from the Mission the promise that their sovereignty would be recognised. By refusing to transfer the Political Department to the Interim National Government British Imperialism gave protection to Princely Autocracy and preserved it as a flank skirmisher which, by

subjecting the Indian Democratic Freedom Movement to an onslaught from the right or the left side, would lend particular strength to the League's frontal attack on it. The odds so far the Soldiers of Freedom in India are heavier than they have been in any other country. In the face of these unprecedentedly heavy odds, sturdiest optimism is discouraged and most irrepressible enthusiasm is repressed. But as Acharya Kripalani said: "We shall soon be meeting in the Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution of free India." The truth is that we shall be meeting there to have a more amplified picture of the huge hurdles and obstacles that block our way to the goal of unity and liberty. Our salvation lies only in our unflinching adherence to the lofty ideal of unity and high principles of democracy and in our determination to combat their enemies on all fronts and not rest till we have annihilated them.

CHAPTER VII

The Burdens of 1947

The White Man from Britain has lingeringly shifted the load of political responsibility to the Black Man in India and he has notoriously enough, made the load heavier in the very shifting of it, just like the proverbial salt merchant who burdened his donkey with sponges in order to penalise the animal who would habitually dip the salt load in the water while crossing the stream in order to lighten the heavy weight on its muscles.

Kripalani knows that the British have loaded us with the sponge of this Constituent Assembly and if we let go the hold mud stream, we shall have to lift the mountain of imperialism bodily off our souls. Even though Mr Jinnah is seizing the very tail of the Indian National Congress, yet the beast of national burden must not kick up his heels, and save thereby Mr Jinnah a serious hurt and itself an increased burden of the sponge of a freedom filled up with the water of British Imperialism.

I

MINORITY VETOES MAJORITY

As by Mr Churchill so by Mr Attlee, it was vehemently argued that any change in the New Delhi administrative structure should be preceded by a League Congress agreement. Of course, Mr Attlee said that he would not allow any minority to place its veto on the progress of the majority. But the translation of this fundamentally sound

declaration into practice was rendered impossible by the continued occupation of key-posts in India by Mr Churchill's political children. When the Muslim League refused to have any alliance with the Congress, except on its own preposterous terms, and skulked in its tent and the Congress qualified itself for being invited to form the Interim Government, the latter was undoubtedly invited to do so, but the representatives of British Imperialism lost their appetite and sleep. They can eat well and sleep well only now, when the League is in the Interim Government without the idea of accepting the long-term plan and with the intention of scrapping the short-term scheme. The League is functioning not as its helpful limb but as a separate fifth columnist *bloc* inside it, allying itself with the mischievous bureaucracy and trying to paralyse it. British Imperialism has to-day four classes of allies in India (1) Jinnahites, (2) Ambedkarites, (3) Princes, and (4) its tribal servitors. Jinnahites are most active and useful to it. Prospering on the two-nation theory and the Pakistan slogan they have plunged the country into internecine warfare, thus enabling British Imperialism to repair its battered position. While referring to the fact that our communal differences are "the foreigner's trump card" which is being played cleverly and subtly, Acharya Kripalani asserts that the two-nation theory is "unhistorical, unscientific, unethical and unnatural," but he does not say how it is to be destroyed. It is a hideous monster produced by communal electorates and as its soul resides in them, it can be killed only by their extermination. British Imperialism created communal electorates and developed them assiduously with a sinister object in view. The Congress by pursuing a policy of appeasement towards communalism—one of its worst mistakes was not to reject the

Communal Award straightaway but to quibble about it—permitted communal electorates to be extended and stabilised. Even after the birth of the monstrous two-nation theory the pursuit of this dangerous policy continued. Bombay became India's Munich, where Mahatma Gandhi's talks with Mr Jinnah revealed what suicidal bungling had been in progress. I hope says Acharya Kripalani "our elders will guard themselves and the country against being coerced or cajoled into any anti national and undemocratic compromises in the future. So do we hope."

II

KRIPALANI'S MOTION IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

The Constituent Assembly at its session on December 10, held under the chairmanship of Dr Sachchidananda Sinha adopted a resolution setting up a committee for deciding rules of procedure.

The proclamation of India as an independent sovereign republic forms part of a declaration of objectives which has been drafted for discussion by Congress members of the Constituent Assembly. The draft was considered at a 90-minute meeting of these members this evening and was held over for further examination.

Points stressed in the draft are.—In the constitution to be drawn up, the territories of British India, the Indian states and other territories willing to be constituted into the independent sovereign India be formed into a union.

Such territories whether within their present boundaries or with such others as may be determined by the Constituent Assembly and thereafter according to the law of the constitution shall possess and retain the status of

autonomous units, together with residuary powers, and exercise all functions and powers of Government and administration, save and except those that are vested in or assigned to the Union and save and except such powers and functions as are inherent in the Union.

After power and authority of the sovereign independent India, its constituent parts and organs of Government are derived from the people.

The constitution should guarantee and secure to all the people of India justice, social, economic and political, equality of status, of opportunity and equality before law, and freedom of thought, expression, belief, vocation, association and action, subject to law and public morality

Adequate safeguards be provided for minorities, backward areas and classes

Acharya Kripalani, moving the resolution with regard to the rules of procedure, pointed out that in the form in which it was circulated. It provided that the committee should report on "rules of procedure of the Assembly, sections and committees" He decided to drop the words "sections and committees were a part of the Assembly and the addition of those words was, therefore, superfluous.

Dr Suresh Chandra Bannerjee "It is the intention of the mover that the rules should also apply to sections In my opinion, sections should be specifically mentioned here, because you know there are difficulties with particular section."

Dr Shyamaprasad Mukherjee supporting Dr Bannerjee, said that it would be safer to specify clearly that the rules of procedure of the Assembly should apply to sections and committees

"Acharya Kripalani himself mentioned that if we leave the thing as it is, rules could be made whereby you can lay down that sections and committees will not have power to make rules which are contrary to or inconsistent with the rules made by this committee

"That itself shows that it is competent for this procedure committee to regulate, to some extent, the procedure of the sections and committees.

In view of the debate that had already taken place, it was much better that the words sections and committees stood rather than leave the matter open to further discussion and points of order later on. It should be laid down definitely by this house that the Constituent Assembly is one and indivisible that the sections as already pointed out, are the sections of the Assembly and that they may not form themselves into independent bodies which can make their own rules inconsistent with the rules of this Assembly

III

MAZZINNI PLUS SHIVAJI

It seems that at his birth all the gods and goddesses assembled to bless him with different varieties of good fortune but the goddess Lakshmi was not perhaps one of them and it is fortunate for this country that he is not rich. He had no fine mansion well laid garden no well

decorated room, no array of servants to attend on him, no bejewelled wife to sit by his side and no host of flatterers to fawn on him or to partake of his dinner parties. Poor as he is, he is contented with the most humble of clothes and diets, yet engaged in the most strenuous national work and imbued with the highest of idealism and integrity of character. Never was there a President more slender in monetary resources than Acharya, who may be pre-eminently called the common man's Rashtrapati.

He has the heart of Mazzinni, shrewdness and political wisdom of Cavour and Shivaji, sternness and yet softness of heart for his countrymen of Clemenceau, who was known not as the Tiger of France, the idealism of Wilson and Briand, the political strategy of Chanekya and simplicity of Cincinnatus—all saturated with Gandhian philosophy and outlook—qualities rare in their analysis and rarer still in their synthesis.

Lord Wavell, in the course of his negotiations with the Congress, will meet a new type, who is short, crisp, practical in his utterances who possesses a rapier like and incisive intellect with a mind which is a granary of practical and political wisdom. Words have no fascination for him. Deeds and deeds alone he understands.

The country looks forward with confidence to the ushering in of freedom under the aegis of this Rashtrapati. The co-operation and goodwill of crores of his countrymen go to him to make his regime as Congress President eminently successful and glorious.

IV

SURVEYING THE SITUATION

On December 22 1946

The Congress Working Committee in a long statement reviewing the position arising from the British Government's declaration of December 6 and subsequent pronouncements in Parliament express the view that a reference to the Federal Court is in present conditions uncalled for unbecoming and unsuited to the dignity of the Congress and the Federal Court.

On the question of reference to the Federal Court the Committee say While the Congress has always been willing to agree to a reference to the Federal Court, any reference now when none of the other parties are prepared to join in it or to accept it, and one of them does not even accept the basis of the scheme, becomes totally uncalled for unbecoming and unsuited to the dignity of either the Congress or the Federal Court. By their repeated statements, British statesmen have ruled this out.

The Committee concludes The Working Committee are still of the opinion that the interpretation put by the British Government in regard to the method of voting in the sections is not in conformity with provincial autonomy, which is one of the fundamental basis of the scheme proposed in the Statement of May 16 The Committee are anxious to avoid anything that may come in the way of the successful working of the Constituent Assembly and are prepared to do everything in their power to seek and

obtain the largest measure of co-operation, provided that no fundamental principle is violated. In view of the importance and urgency of the issues facing the country and the far-reaching consequences which must follow any decisions, the Working Committee are convening an emergent meeting of the A-I C C., in Delhi early in January, to consider the latest developments and to give such directions as it may deem fit.

Earlier the statement discusses various statements made on behalf of the British Government and says that in spite of assurances to the effect that no additions to or interpretations of the statement of May 16 were going to be made, the British Government have now issued a statement on December 6, which clearly in several respects goes beyond the original statement, on the basis of which progress has been made till now

The statement expresses regret "that the British Government should have acted in a manner which has not been in keeping with their own assurances, and which has created suspicion in the minds of large numbers of people in India. For sometime past, the attitude of the British Government and their representatives in India has been such as to add to the difficulties and complexities of the situation in the country. Their present intervention, long after the members of the Constituent Assembly had been elected, has created a new situation which is full of peril for the future

Following is the full text of Congress Working Committee's statement —

The Working Committee have given careful consideration to the statement issued by the British Government on December 6, as well as other statements made recently on their behalf in Parliament. These statements, though made

by way of interpretation and elucidation, are clearly additions to and variations of the British Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16 1946 on which the whole scheme of the Constituent Assembly was based.

2 The statement of May 16 1946 laid down in paragraph 15 as basic principles of the constitution that there should be a union of India embracing both British India and the States, that all subjects other than Union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the provinces and that provinces should be free to form groups. The Provinces were thus intended to be autonomous, subject to the Union-controlling certain specified subjects. Paragraph 19 laid down *inter alia* the procedure for sections to meet for decisions to be taken as to whether groups should be formed or not, and for any province to elect to come out of the group in which it might have been placed.

3 In their resolution of May 24 1946 the Working Committee pointed out what appeared to be a divergence between the basic principles and the procedure suggested in that a measure of compulsion was introduced which infringed the basic principles of provincial autonomy. The Cabinet Mission thereupon, issued a statement of May 25, 1946 in which it was stated that the interpretation put by the Congress resolution on paragraph 15 of the statement, to the effect that the provinces can in the first instance make the choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed does not accord with the Delegation's intentions. The reasons for grouping of the provinces are well known and this is an essential feature of the scheme and can only be materialized by agreement between the two parties." The point at issue may not merely be one of procedure, but the fundamental principle of provincial autonomy and

whether or not a province or part should be coerced against its will.

V

COMPULSORY GROUPING

4. The Congress made it clear later that the objection was not to provinces entering sections, but to compulsory grouping and the possibility of a dominating province framing a constitution for another province entirely against the wishes of the latter. This might result in the framing of rules, the regulation of franchise, electorates, constituencies for elections and the composition of the legislature, which might seriously prejudice or even nullify the provision for a province subsequently to opt out of a group. It was pointed out that this could never be the intention of the Cabinet Mission, as it would be repugnant to the basic principles and policy of the scheme they had propounded. The Congress approach to the problem of constitution-making has all along been that coercion should not be exercised against any province or part of the country and that the constitution of free India should be drawn-up by the co-operation and good-will of all parties and provinces concerned.

5. In a letter dated June 15, 1946, from Lord Wavell to Maulana Azad, President of the Congress, it was stated that "the delegation and I are aware of your objections to the principle of grouping. I would, however, point out that the statement of May 16 does not make grouping compulsory. It leaves the decision to the elected representatives of the provinces concerned, sitting together in sections. The only provision, which is made, is that the representatives of certain provinces should meet in sections so that they can decide whether or not they wish to form groups."

Thus the principle which was emphasised again, was that grouping was not compulsory, and in regard to sections, a certain procedure was indicated. This procedure was not clear and could be interpreted in more than one way and in any event, a point of procedure could not override a basic principle.

We pointed out that the right interpretation should be one which did no violence to that principle. Further in order to smooth the way to the co-operation of all concerned in the working of the proposed scheme, we not only made it clear that we were prepared to go into the sections but also we suggested, that if our interpretation was not accepted, we would be agreeable to a reference on this point to the Federal Court.

6 It is well known that the proposal in regard to grouping affected injuriously to provinces especially namely Assam and the North West Frontier Provinces, as well as the Sikhs in the Punjab. Their representatives expressed their strong disapproval of this proposal. In a letter to the Secretary of State, dated May 25, 1946 Master Tara Singh gave an expression to the anxiety and apprehensions of the Sikhs and asked for clarification in regard to certain matters. The Secretary of State sent an answer to this letter on June 1, 1946 in the course of which he said: "I have considered carefully the detailed points you raise at the end of your letter. I fear the Ministry cannot issue any additions to or interpretation of the statement."

7 In spite of this explicit statement, the British Government have, on December 6 issued a statement which is both an addition and an interpretation, to the statement of May 16, 1946. They have done so after more than six and a half months, during which period many developments have taken

place as a consequence of the original statement. Throughout this period, the position of the Congress was made repeatedly clear to the British Government or their representatives, and it was with full knowledge of this position that the British Government took subsequent steps in furtherance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals. That position was in conformity with the basic principles laid down in the statement of May 16, 1946, which statement the Congress had accepted in its entirety.

Further the Congress had expressed its willingness to refer, if necessity arose, the point of interpretation to the Federal Court, whose decision should be accepted by the parties concerned. In the course of his letter dated June 28, 1946, addressed to Mr. Jinnah, the Viceroy stated that "Congress had accepted the statement of May 16." In the course of a broadcast on August 24, 1946, the Viceroy, in appealing to the Muslim League to co-operate, pointed out that the Congress are ready to agree that any dispute of interpretation may be referred to the Federal Court.

8. The Muslim League reversed its former decision and rejected the British Cabinet Mission's scheme by a formal resolution and even decided to resort to 'direct action'. Their spokesmen have since, repeatedly challenged the very basis of that scheme, that is, the constitution of a union of India and have reverted to their demand for a partition of India. Even after the British Government's statement of December 6, 1946, the leaders of the Muslim League have reiterated this demand for partition and the establishment of two separate independent governments in India.

9. When the invitation of the British Government was received by the Congress at the end of November last, to

send its representatives to London the Congress position was clearly indicated again. It was on an assurance of the Prime Minister of Great Britain that a representative of the Congress proceeded to London.

VI

ADDITIONS MADE

10 In spite of this assurance and of previous assurances to the effect that no additions to or interpretation of the statement of May 16, 1946 were going to be made, the British Government have now issued a statement which clearly in several respects, goes beyond the original statement on the basis of which progress has been made till now

11 The Working Committee deeply regret that the British Government should have acted in a manner which has not been so keeping with their own assurances and which have created suspicion in the minds of large numbers of people in India. For sometime past, the attitude of the British Government and their representatives in India has been such as to add to the difficulties and complexities of the situation in the country. Their present intervention long after the members of the Constituent Assembly had been elected has created a new situation which is full of peril for the future. Because of this, the Working Committee have given anxious and prolonged thought to it.

12 The Congress seeks to frame, through the Constituent Assembly a constitution of a free and independent India with the willing co-operation of all elements of the Indian people. The Working Committee regret that Muslim League members of the Constituent Assembly have refrained from attending its opening session. The Committee, however appreciate and express their gratification at the presence in the Constituent Assembly of representatives of all other in-

terests and sections of the people of India and note with pleasure the spirit of co-operation in a common task and a high endeavour which has been in evidence during the sessions of the Assembly. The Committee will continue their efforts to make the Constituent Assembly fully representative of all the people of India and trust that members of the Muslim League will give their co-operation in this great task. In order to achieve this, the Committee have advised Congress representatives in the Assembly to postpone consideration of important issues to a subsequent meeting.

VII

SMUTS IN TRUE COLOURS

Commenting on Field-Marshal Smuts' recent speech in Pretoria, the Congress President, Acharya Kripalani, said on December 26, 1946 —

“It is the statement of a man who, smarting under defeat, has thrown off the mask and blurted out the truth. All these years the aged Marshal has posed as the champion of democracy and the right of man. When the British Empire was under the shadow of Hitler's threat, he became an eloquent advocate of the four freedoms and thundered against the Nazi theory of racial superiority. In fact, Hitler's claim to rule over a portion of Europe was a modest one compared with the claim of a handful of white intruders perpetually to exploit the coloured millions of Africa. The whole stress of the Marshal's grouse is against the idea of human equality which according to him was unfortunately dominant at the United Nations Organisation.

“It is indeed true that equality does not prevail anywhere in the world and every reformer has to advocate it and work for it. However, instead of deploring the fact of

inequality, this champion of the Atlantic Charter quotes it as an argument against the ideal itself. His statement is a pathetic confession of his dread of equality. It is not the fate of the 150 000 000 coloured people that concerns him but of the small and privileged white minority. What will happen to it if the submerged humanity of Africa rise up and claim their legitimate place in the land of their fathers? What happens to those who grab more than is legitimately theirs? History has repeated the answer often enough. The problem is not confined to Africa but is spread over the whole of Asia. If the whites cannot reconcile themselves to the idea of equality with the coloured races of the world they have no place in Asia and Africa. Racial imperialism is even more odious than economic imperialism. So long as either of them prevails and so long as there are Smuts and Churchills to turn the four freedoms into a mockery, there can be no peace in this world.

JAI HIND

